

Atom health chief warning on children

Advice to 'worried' workers at Sellafield

By Ronald Faux, Sheila Gunn and Thomson Prentice

Sellafield workers who fear their children may develop cancer might be best advised not to have a family, the director of health and safety at the Cumbrian nuclear plant said yesterday.

Dr Roger Berry's remarks in the wake of Professor Martin Gardner's report linking radiation in men working at the plant and leukaemia in their children were immediately condemned by environmental groups and disowned by British Nuclear Fuels, which runs Sellafield.

They came at a news conference after Professor Gardner of Southampton University met 900 Sellafield workers to explain the implications of his report which showed that the likelihood of a child developing cancer was seven times the national average if its father had been exposed to radiation at the

plant before conception. Asked what was the best advice to give any worker worried about the report, Dr Berry replied: "If some of them are especially worried, the proper advice may be for them not to have a family. That would be the right advice for someone who is that worried, but it is very much a personal matter."

Mr Jim Begbie, convenor of the GMB craft section at the plant, described Dr Berry's answer as a harsh and unhelpful statement; and British

Photograph

Nuclear Fuels said it was not company policy to advise workers not to have children.

Mr Stan Crush of Greenpeace said: "It is outrageous that Dr Berry can even consider advising workers not to have children. It is not for the workers to change their ways, but for British Nuclear Fuels to stop its dangerous practices."

Friends of the Earth said it was not acceptable to state the the workforce's children might be at risk of developing leukaemia and that it was the workers' responsibility not to have children to avoid this.

"It is British Nuclear Fuels' responsibility to ensure that its workforce is not exposed to levels of radiation that create this risk. We demand an immediate reduction in the annual dose limits from 50 to 10 millisieverts."

Professor Gardner also called for British Nuclear Fuels to reduce the level of exposure of its workers. "The levels must be as low as can possibly be achieved," he said.

The meeting at Sellafield came as a Ministry of Defence and trade unionists warned MPs that the Trident project could be put in jeopardy because of staff shortages and safety fears within the nuclear industry.

And Mr John Large, a leading independent nuclear

expert, said Britain's Magnox power stations, a fuel reprocessing plant being built at Sellafield may have to be abandoned as uneconomic if workers are to be fully protected from radiation.

The warning on the threat to the Trident project came when the director of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, told the Commons defence committee that difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff meant the programme could not be met without using contract staff.

Mr Jack Dromey, public services secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said all nuclear establishments were facing horrific problems in the wake of Professor Gardner's report. "In the past there was scandalous neglect. At first glance the problems are horrific," he said.

Mr Richard Keep, a TGWU official at Aldermaston, said there was particular concern about safety and he feared that standards would fall if work was contracted out. There were clear differences in standards between staff employed by the Ministry of Defence and outside contractors: "Everything, right down to the tears in suits being worn, show vast differences in safety. The outside contractors are less safety conscious. They are taking a risk."

The Sellafield findings will have considerable consequences for nuclear plant operators around the world, according to an editorial in today's issue of *Nature*.

Although it is not yet proven that radiation exposure of adults makes sometimes leads to the birth of children with leukaemia, the suspected link is bound to be elevated from its status as an untested hypothesis, the journal says.

"An urgent need will quickly be felt for a fuller understanding of the reported association."

Nervous Poles call for talks on border

From Roger Boyes, Warsaw

Mr Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Polish Prime Minister, yesterday called for urgent European talks at which both Germanies and Warsaw would affirm the western frontiers of Poland.

The conference, Mr Mazowiecki said, should be held soon after next month's East German elections and would include Poland, the two German states and the four allied powers.

The plan is for both Germanies to initial the peace treaty anchoring Poland's border. The pact would be finally signed by a unified Germany. Mr Mazowiecki, who sent details of the proposals to the leaders of Britain, the United States and France, but not to Bonn or East Berlin, regards the conference as a prelude to the "two-plus-four" meeting on German unity, Warsaw wants a seat, along with the four allied powers and the two

Germanies, at talks that affect its borders, but is not laying claim to participation in the detailed discussions on unification.

"Poland does not aspire to similar status to the two German states or the great

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powers," Mr Mazowiecki said. "But it is precisely we who have a thousand-kilometre frontier with Germany and so, in that part of the conference devoted to the security of the neighbours, we should be present." Poles felt they were excluded from the European carve-up, at Yalta, and do not want to be locked out again.

The formula agreed recently at the Ottawa "Open Skies" conference, which decided

Britain accused of 'stab in the back' over ivory

By Michael McCarthy
Environment Correspondent



Dr Leakey: Decision by Britain "a disaster".

Britain's decision last month to exempt the huge Hong Kong ivory stockpile from the world ban on the ivory trade has led directly to an upsurge in elephant poaching in Africa, Dr Richard Leakey, director of the Kenyan Wildlife Service, said yesterday.

The decision was "a disaster" which had sent a message to poachers and traders all over Africa and in the Middle East that ivory could again be sold, Dr Leakey said. Speaking in London on a world tour to raise funds for Kenya's national parks, Dr Leakey said: "The British Government decision has almost nullified the gains made in trying to save the African elephant over the last six

Thatcher warms to a joke by Heath



When the sniping had to stop: Mrs Thatcher laughing as Mr Heath cracks a joke at his Savoy celebration lunch yesterday.

Hostility quickly resumes

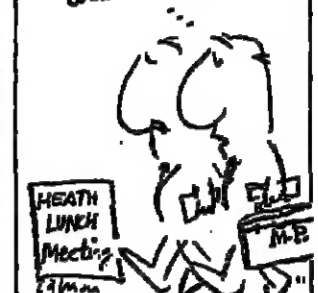
By Richard Ford
Political Correspondent

All was sweetness and light for 2½ hours yesterday between Mr Edward Heath and Mrs Thatcher as the old adversaries celebrated with almost 500 guests his 40 years as an MP.

But barely had the last mouthful of chocolate mousse been digested and the crowd departed than hostilities resumed with a vengeance.

Before and after the lunch, at the Savoy Hotel, London, the former Prime Minister launched stinging attacks on his successor's economic policy and its attitudes towards

He wanted to sing 'My Old Dutch' but SHE said that was too EUROPEAN.



sanctions against South Africa, the European Community and German unity.

Outside the Savoy, he dismissed Mrs Thatcher's speech last weekend in which she voiced fears over German unity and said it was understandable that, for some, bitter memories of the past would colour their view of the present.

There might be suspicion on German unity in some quarters, and he regretted remarks made last Sunday. "They are not evil people. We got rid of the evil people, we defeated

Continued on page 24, col 4

Overspending by councils may hit £3bn, Patten says

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

Local authority spending could be heading for a £3 billion overshoot what the Government regards as reasonable for local authority expenditure next year.

The Secretary of State for the Environment, responding to rising Conservative concern over poll tax estimates, made plain that the Government would fulfil its responsibilities to cap "outrageous" community charges. He declined, however, to disclose the extent of planned capping.

The £3 billion figure would be 10 per cent above what the Government regards as reasonable for local authority expenditure next year.

Mr Patten's warning came amid strong indications that

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he will be seeking a substantial increase in resources for local authorities in 1991/92 from the Treasury to lessen the political damage done to the Government by the charge.

Fund advice 'unlawful'

The Government has been forced to revise its guidance on the operation of its £203 million Social Fund after the High Court ruled yesterday that existing guidelines were "unlawful" (Jill Sherman writes).

However, the Department of Social Security said last night that ministers may decide to replace the "defective" guidance with a directive instructing local officers how to manage the scheme of grants and loans to stay within budget. The pattern of awards would not change.

Guidelines illegal, page 6
Law Report, page 42

Waldegrave defends line on Pretoria sanctions

By Our Chief Political Correspondent

The Government yesterday defended its decision to go it alone over relaxing sanctions against South Africa as the Labour Party claimed that it amounted to a "miserable humiliation" for Britain.

Mr William Waldegrave, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, said it was important to make a "symbolic but practical response" to President de Klerk's reform moves. And he attacked the "humbug" that was spoken about sanctions.

But there were strong signs

However, Whitehall sources say that suggestions that he will be looking for a £2 billion increase are only guesswork.

Senior Conservative MPs believe that the likelihood of such a large overshoot means it is certain Mr Patten will win a large increase.

Many believe that the Government's estimates for the community charge in many areas were wildly unrealistic. The Government's estimate for local authority spending next year of £32.8 billion was

Continued on page 24, col 7

\$1bn TV venture in US

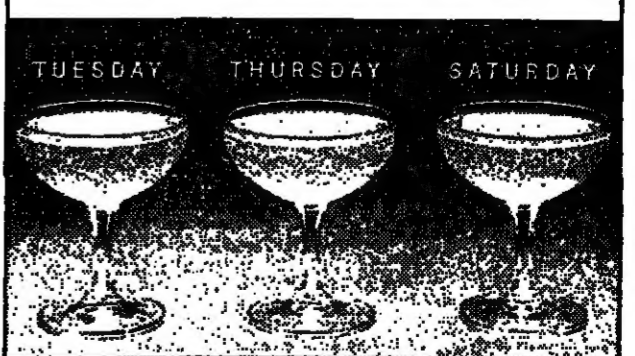
Mr Rupert Murdoch is helping to launch up to 108 satellite channels in the US. The \$1 billion Sky Cable service involves The News Corporation, NBC, Cablevision Systems Corporation and Hughes Communications.

The most powerful transmitter yet for commercial use will be launched in 1993. "We

have great confidence in the proposed Hughes technology, which should break new ground for future entertainment and information transmission standards," said Mr Murdoch, chief executive of The News Corporation. His Sky Television launched four channels a year ago.

Details, page 30

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INSIDE

Rebel with a majority?

● "Next Sunday he may become a member of that very rare breed: revolutionary leftists with a more or less democratic mandate. As Nicaragua gears itself up for its first fully contested election since the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza, we profile Daniel Ortega. See page 13

● The recent storms may bring about a change in the way media forecasters present the weather.

● See our four-page Science & Technology section, beginning on page 35

● There were three winners of yesterday's £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize (see page 3). Today's chance to win is on page 33

Lloyds lifts mortgage rate

Lloyds Bank has raised its mortgage rate to a record 15.7 per cent, fuelling fears of even higher increases to come. The Alliance & Leicester and National & Provincial, two of Britain's largest building societies, both increased rates to 15.4 per cent. Page 25

Accountancy examinations

The Institute of Chartered Accountants' exam results will be published in *The Times* on Saturday. Copies of the paper will be available from 10pm on Friday evening at Victoria and King's Cross stations, Leicester Square, Marble Arch and Charing Cross.

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'Catastrophic effect' if ambulance pay talks collapse

By Tim Jones, Employment Affairs Correspondent

Both sides in the ambulance dispute were last night warned that failure to achieve a peace settlement at today's talks could have a "catastrophic" effect on the service.

The warning, from Mr Vernon Jolliffe, leader of the Association of Chief Ambulance Officers, came as representatives from both sides prepared for the meeting of the industry's Whitley Council in a mood of controlled optimism.

Although both sides refused to give details of the skeleton agreement reached during the talks at the offices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service on Monday night, it is understood the unions have virtually accepted they will not achieve the pay bargaining mechanism which has been central to their demands.

One leading union source said last night: "There may be a form of words to fudge the issue but we are not expecting the kind of mechanism we wanted to tie our rates in future to inflation and to firefighters and policemen."

He added: "Because of the hardship suffered there will be a lot of anger although there will probably be a small majority in favour of ending the issue."

In return for watering down that demand, the union leaders are thought to have been offered a two-year deal worth about 15 per cent which would add about £23 million to the NHS wage bill. They had been asking for a one-year 11.4 per cent rise against the 9 per

cent over 18 months offered by the management.

It is understood that one suggestion enabling them to be paid more money would be the restoration of full overtime rates for weekend and unsocial hours working.

There is also likely to be agreement on additional payments for more highly skilled paramedical staff, giving them rises of more than 16 per cent in London and more than 14 per cent elsewhere.

Mr Jolliffe said: "Having seen hopes built up, it would be catastrophic if the next few days failed to deliver a settlement."

"My fear is that more and more staff will go on strike or

6 A disaster of this kind must not be allowed to happen

even leave the service unless there is a quick settlement."

Since the dispute began, scores of ambulance workers most of whom earn £10,093 a year, have left for better paid jobs.

An immediate indication of anger over reports that the pay mechanism may be dropped came from Merseyside where crews have voted for an indefinite strike.

One shop steward said: "It will be a total waste of time if we accept a deal which does not include a pay formula."

Mr David Skinner, head of the casualty department at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, estimated that dur-

ing the dispute there had been at least one avoidable death in every main London accident and emergency department.

"The dispute has been a disaster for the ambulance service, a disaster for accident and emergency medicine and a disaster for the patient."

Mr David Ferguson, consultant in accident and emergency medicine at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, dismissed fears that people had been left to die during the dispute.

"There was a lot of concern that folk were dying in the street which really did not make sense."

"We were never able to prove that our mortality figures were higher than prior to the strike."

● A Red Cross ambulance driver who was involved in a crash as he answered an emergency call during the dispute is to face court action.

Police have summonsed Mr Anthony Pownall to appear before magistrates at Solihull, West Midlands, to answer a charge of driving without due care and attention.

Mr Pownall was at the wheel of a Red Cross ambulance which was standing in for striking crews last November when it was involved in a head-on smash with a car near Solihull town centre. A woman motorist was slightly injured.

The crash in Lode Lane, Solihull, was near the headquarters of the West Midlands ambulance service and ambulance men in dispute went to the aid of injured drivers.

Sellafield workers' cancer teach-in



Nuclear warning: Professor Martin Gardner, second from left, with Sellafield conveners Mr Bill Robinson, Mr Bernard Owens and Mr Gary Stoddart, after explaining the implications of his report linking nuclear workers with child cancer.

Mob prevents arrest of IRA suspects

By Edward Gorman, Irish Affairs Correspondent

Security forces were unable to hold three suspected IRA terrorists caught while apparently trying to shoot down an army helicopter in Northern Ireland. The soldiers were surrounded and stoned by an angry mob.

An Army Wessex helicopter gave chase after the pilot spotted the men carrying what appeared to be heavy machine-guns near the village of Cullyhanna in South Armagh on Tuesday. At least two members of the gang were believed to be still on the run last night.

The pilot followed the men along country lanes as they fled, hijacking a number of cars and discarding weapons

by the roadside in the process. Eventually the pilot put down the aircraft, allowing a 12-man army and police patrol he was carrying to arrest a number of men in the village of Silverbridge, about six miles from where they were originally spotted.

According to security sources, a hostile crowd gathered around the soldiers, and they were stoned, preventing them taking the arrested men from the scene. The suspects escaped. However, police said last night that a number of men have since been detained for questioning in connection with the incident.

Last night a big army and police search was still under way for members of the

gang, believed to have consisted of four men. Weapons recovered on the roadside included two 7.62mm high velocity machine-guns and three rifles. Security sources believe the gang must have been about to launch an attack either on an army helicopter or a permanent vehicle checkpoint (PVC) on the border.

In December an IRA team killed two soldiers and seriously wounded a third, during an attack on a PVC in Co Fermanagh.

● Police uncovered a haul of arms and ammunition hidden in a grave in a cemetery in west Belfast yesterday. Six rifles, a shotgun, a handgun and arms and silencers were found in a cemetery.

Sentences 'based on inaccurate records'

By Frances Gibb
Legal Affairs
Correspondent

Defendants are being sentenced on the basis of criminal records which are in a "terrifying state of inaccuracy", the Commons Home Affairs Committee investigating the Crown Prosecuting Service were told last night.

Mr Anthony Edwards, Secretary of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association, said that this state of affairs was "very worrying". It put an enormous burden on defence lawyers, who often found themselves with more up-to-date information than the court on their clients' criminal records.

Mr Stephen Ridley, a former senior Crown prosecutor and secretary of the Law Society's Criminal Law Committee, said it was extraordinary that if a vehicle was stopped on the road the police could find out who owned it within seconds. "And yet criminal records are not being kept up to date."

Most courts were obliged to sentence on the basis of inaccurate information, "which cannot be in the interest of justice."

The chairman of the Home Affairs Committee, Mr John Wheeler, said the committee was "very concerned" about the evidence it had received on the state of the criminal records and would be addressing the issue in the course of its inquiry.

Another concern raised by the lawyers were the delays caused because of wrong records. Mr Edwards said much time was wasted obtaining the right records from the police computer at Swansea.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Poison cylinders found on beaches

Fifteen miles of Sussex coastline were closed yesterday as emergency squads in protective clothing and gas masks scoured the beaches for containers of potassium cyanide, a chemical whose vapours are fatal. Two white plastic cylinders each containing a litre of the chemical were found washed up near the Palace Pier at Brighton, and four others at Newhaven, Hove, Ovingdean and Cuckmere Haven.

Police, broadcasting warnings from a helicopter, cleared Brighton seaford, which was crowded with people enjoying bright sunshine and temperatures of 12 degrees C.

Elsewhere fresh gales hit Britain again. In Stoke-on-Trent a freak tornado caused more than £100,000 worth of damage, demolishing chimneys, tearing tiles from roofs, and toppling television aerials.

In south Wales the wind blew a Portakabin on to parked cars, and tore the roof off a house in Beddau, Mid-Glamorgan. On the Severn Bridge a lorry was blown over.

Hint on Ulster talks

The Anglo-Irish agreement cannot be suspended pending talks on political progress in the province, as demanded by Unionists, Mr Gerard Collins, the Irish Foreign Minister, said yesterday after meeting Mr Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. While Mr Brooke feels there may be enough common ground for preliminary talks between parties in Ulster both men agree the prospects amount to a "possibility rather than a probability".

Three robbers jailed

Three members of a gang who robbed a sub-post office were jailed for a total of 30 years by Exeter Crown Court yesterday. The court was told that they forced staff and customers to lie on the floor at gunpoint before fleeing with £11,000 which has not been recovered. Peter Worthington, aged 27, was jailed for 12 years, and Thomas Docherty, aged 30, and Anthony O'Donoghue, aged 22, both received nine years. All are from Torquay, Devon.

Raid by armed police

Armed police yesterday raided a house in Surrey and detained a man wanted in connection with armed robberies in Glasgow. Twenty-four officers, six of them armed, surrounded the house in Bourne Road, Addlestone, after a tip-off from detectives in Scotland. Six other men there were being questioned as a detailed search of the premises was carried out. Officers from Strathclyde later flew to London to talk to the man.

Rival for Kasparov

Gary Kasparov, the Soviet world chess champion, has found a dangerous new rival in his 21-year-old compatriot, Boris Gelfand (Raymond Keene writes). The brilliant but still relatively unknown Gelfand shares the lead with Kasparov and another Soviet grandmaster, Boris Yusupov, with 2½ points out of three in the World Chess Federation tournament in Linares, Spain. Gelfand drew with Kasparov in round one.

Conservationists fight Pennine road schemes

Proposals to improve the cross-Pennine route between Manchester and Sheffield would "severely damage one of the most important landscapes in Britain", the Council for the Protection of Rural England said yesterday (Our Transport Correspondent writes).

The so-called Woodhead Pass scheme is one of a series of new or proposed road projects affecting the Pennines which local residents and rural protection societies fear would have a devastating impact on the Peak District National Park.

The Woodhead Pass proposal, contained in the new roads report *Trunk Roads England: Into the 1990s*, published on Tuesday, calls for the improvement of the A616-A628 between Tintwistle, near

Manchester, and Stocksbridge, near Sheffield. Transport officials say the improvements would include one bend to "straighten out the road" to make the road safer, especially in winter when it is often impassable.

Miss Penny Evans, the CPRE's transport campaigner, fears however that the difficult terrain makes the proposed improvements unworkable, which could lead to increased pressure for a new "multi-lane all-weather route".

"But what we are really worried about is the principle of putting roads through national parks."

"The Government has proposed improvements to the Woodhead Pass route without saying that it runs through a national park," she said.

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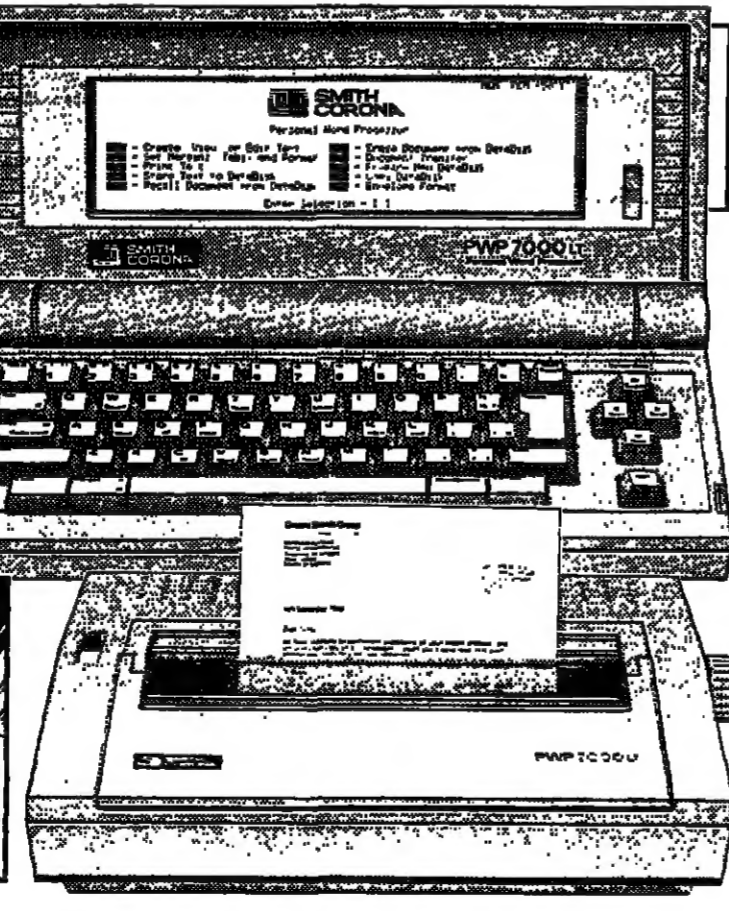
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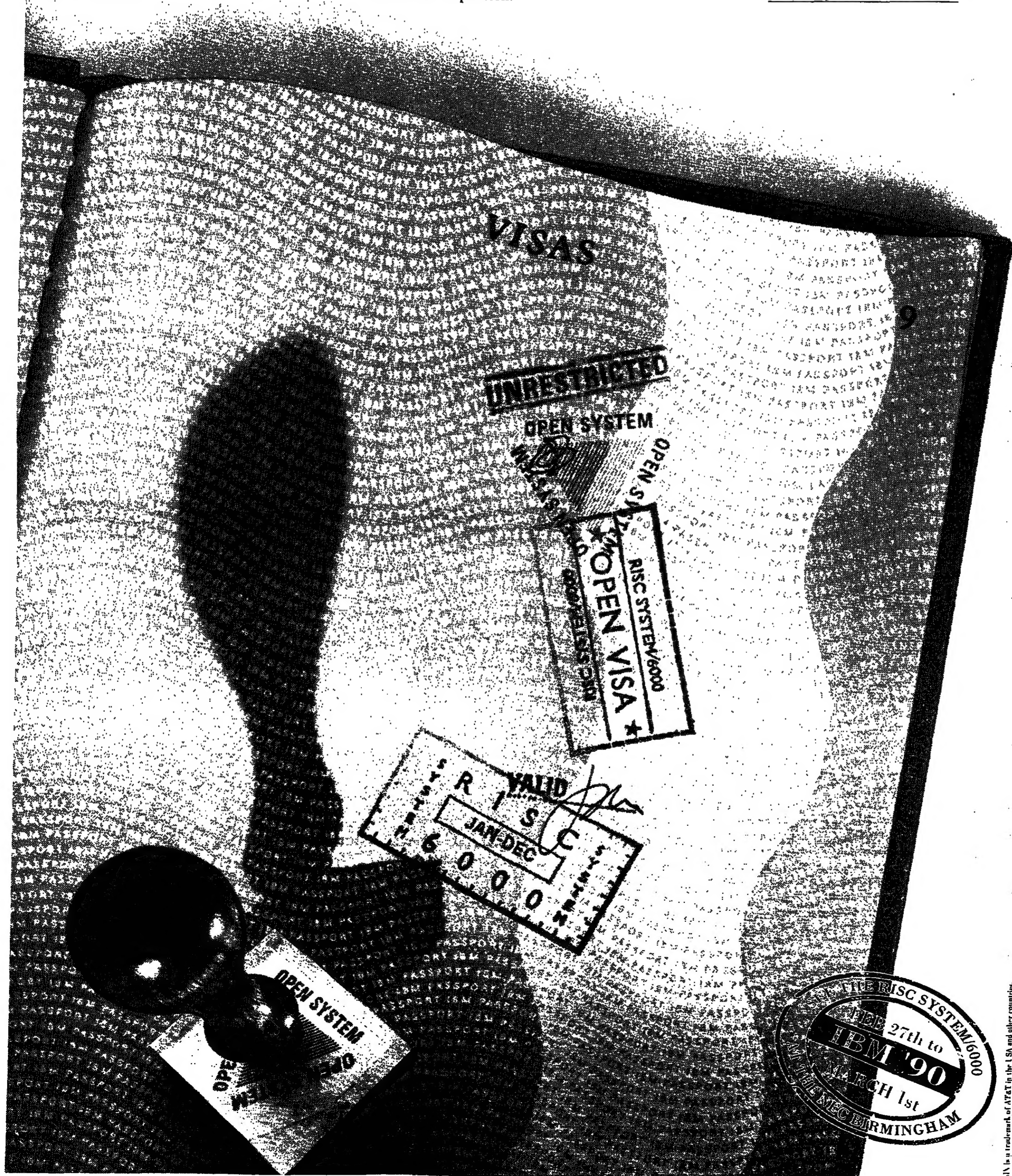
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Bottomley turns to YTS in search for nurses of the future

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

A new drive to increase the number of Youth Training Scheme places in the health service was launched yesterday to ease the nurse recruitment crisis.

The move coincided with preliminary results from six pilot studies showing that YTS trainees had worked successfully in clinical areas, taking on various nursing duties.

Mrs Virginia Bottomley, Minister for Health, said that with impending skill shortages the health service had to corner its share of the young labour force and compete effectively with other big employers.

Only 50 health authorities are directly participating in youth training schemes, which involve only 2,000 trainees. Although the health service is Britain's biggest employer, it takes on less than 1 per cent of the youth training workforce.

However, speakers at a conference held by the Department of Health in London yesterday suggested that 20,000 trainees could be taken on in the health service within the next two years if all 190 districts took part.

The step also foreshadows the introduction of unqualified health care assistants this summer. They will replace the existing nursing auxiliaries and helpers for professions allied to medicine. An esti-

mated 100,000 auxiliaries and helpers will be eligible to become the new assistants.

School leavers coming in on the YTS schemes starting in May, would be able to work towards qualifications for health care assistants and, in the long term, towards professional qualifications.

Mr John Atkins from Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, said health authorities could offset the costs of health care assistant training by using YTS funding.

Mrs Bottomley admitted there had been "some doubt" as to whether trainees should work in front-line clinical areas. Professional organizations such as the Royal College of Nursing have said youngsters could be put off nursing if they were exposed

to distressing cases on wards too soon.

Mrs Bottomley said yesterday any scheme would have to be closely monitored and supervised. But results from the pilot schemes — in Ayrshire and Arran, Barnsley, Gwynedd, Rochdale, North Staffordshire and Wandsworth — were encouraging, she said.

Trainees have been washing and dressing patients, feeding and getting patients up, making beds and preparing menus. They have been working in a number of clinical areas, including acute and long-stay general and mental health wards, children's wards and physiotherapy, occupational and x-ray departments.

Department officials said the new health care assistants would be expected to take on much wider nursing duties such as taking blood pressure, taking temperatures and using catheters and drips, under supervision. Discussions are continuing over whether they should administer drugs.

"Well-motivated and committed staff will be harder than ever to come by over the next few years," Mrs Bottomley said. "The Youth Training Scheme and the complementary initiative of health care assistants provide opportunities for the NHS to secure its share of what is available."



Mrs Bottomley: Pilot schemes "encouraging".

Heading towards cigarette-free target

By Libby Jakes

Health campaigners yesterday urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to put 20p on the a packet of cigarettes and to remove tobacco from the Retail Price Index as his contribution to No Smoking Day. The nation's collective effort to give up will take place on March 14, less than a week before the Budget.

Mr David Simpson, of Action on Smoking and Health, said: "There is evidence that tobacco consumption in Britain, which between 1980 and 1986 declined more rapidly than anywhere else in the world, is now on the increase."

"A 15p price rise would put the cost of smoking back to the peak levels it then reached. But it will have to go much higher if smoking, which kills in the same proportions as cholera did in the last century, is not to re-emerge as an epidemic."

At a press conference to publicize the day, Mr Simpson said the Government would not be reluctant to save the hearts and lungs of smokers through their pockets on the ground that higher taxation of tobacco would mean a cut in consumption. In 1987-88 tobacco yielded the Treasury about \$6 billion.

"Tobacco now accounts for only 4 per cent of total government revenue, as opposed to 16 per cent in 1948," he said. "Besides, we've never yet been blessed with a Chancellor who couldn't find another source of money when one dries up."

Baroness Hooper, Under-Secretary of State in the Department of Health, said she hoped that the seventh annual No Smoking Day would be as successful as last



Getting to grips with the problem: Anne Robinson at the No Smoking Day press launch.

year's, when an estimated 50,000 adult smokers, 18 per cent of those who tried, gave up for good, compared with 800 on any normal day. Although there are still 12 million smokers, representing 31 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men, it is thought that at least two-thirds want to "reform".

Lady Hooper said: "No Smoking Day is valuable because it is a stimulus to make the big decision, giving them a specific day on which to stop."

This year's campaign includes television advertisements urging smokers to "Quit and Win". They feature the actors Frank Windsor and Geraldine James, Anne Robinson the BBC presenter, and three members of the Royal Corps of Transport,

who would all like to be ex-smokers.

Miss Robinson, who started 20 years ago and now gets through two packets a day, said: "I'm tired of being frowned on and lectured and sick of people being shocked that I smoke."

"I'm also looking forward to having more free time. Smokers waste so much time sitting down to have a cigarette."

University research cash boost 'essential'

By Thomson Prentice Science Correspondent

University researchers are having to work with about £100 million worth of obsolete equipment and extra government spending on science is essential, according to a report by the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) published yesterday.

It says 14 per cent of research equipment in British universities and polytechnics is inadequate, mainly through obsolescence. Although three-quarters of the equipment is in good working condition, more than a third is ten or more years old and 17 per cent of it is either in poor condition or inoperable.

The findings, the result of a comprehensive survey, show "serious deficiencies". "One item in seven is no longer adequate for its purpose and university scientists could spend an extra £260 million on equipment," the report says.

Sir David Phillips, chairman of the ABRC said: "There is no doubt that some further increase in government spending on science is essential. Only then will the research councils be able to invest in equipment at the rate needed to sustain scientific excellence in the UK."

The survey covered the non-clinical science and engineering departments of 59 universities and university colleges, and five polytechnics, and estimated the replacement value of equipment at £700 million.

College dispute

Lecturers urged to ballot on pay offer

By Douglas Brown, Education Reporter

Local authority employers yesterday appealed for an end to the 19-month-old lecturers' pay dispute which has affected three million students in colleges of technology and further education.

Mr Neil Fletcher, leader of the employers' side on the National Joint Council for lecturers in England and Wales, called on the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education to ballot members on a 8.5 per cent pay offer. He said the association had not held a ballot of its 140,000 members in local authority colleges since the employers' opening offer of 5.3 per cent in 1988.

Union members are refusing to set or mark examination papers or to undertake any continuous assessment in protest at a pay offer made last November. Since then the employers have improved the offer for the 17 months from April last year to this September from 8 per cent, plus a £700 one-off payment, to an across-the-board rise of 8.5 per cent on all grades.

Mr Fletcher said he believed most lecturers would now accept the new offer which would increase the salary of a lecturer at the top of the main scale to £16,674 and put senior lecturers on £20,127 a year.

The union has objected to the employers' attempts to link the pay offer to changes in work practices which would give college principals the right to require lecturers to teach for up to 23½ hours a week.

At present lecturers can only be required to teach for 21 hours, except in emer-

gencies and employers want to remove the "emergencies only" rule.

The lecturers' association has offered to take the dispute over hours to arbitration and believes a pay deal could be concluded if the hours' issue was out of the way. Mr Fletcher says the union knows the employers' proposals are inter-dependent.

Mr Fletcher's appeal coincided with the announcement of a £100,000 government initiative to help further education colleges promote themselves to employers and potential students. Television and radio commercials will be used to encourage more school-leavers to remain in education by taking college courses and employers will be encouraged to make more use of existing courses and to use colleges for training.

Mr John MacGregor, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, announcing the formation of a national further education marketing unit, said: "It is vital that Britain's workforce starts preparing now for the skills we will need in the 21st century." The £100,000 was intended to be "pump priming" and industry would be expected to sponsor most of the unit's activities. The unit will be based in Bristol and will start work in April.

Almost a quarter of secondary schools have acted on the Government's call for teachers to gain experience of industry through work placement schemes, Mr Alan Howarth, Under Secretary of State for Education, said yesterday.

Tour operator fined

A tour operator has been fined £1,500 by magistrates in Nottingham and ordered to pay £300 compensation to a family who arrived at their hotel in Benidorm, Spain, to find the swimming pool still being built. ILG Travel Ltd, a holding company which owns Intasun, were also ordered to pay £270 costs after admitting a breach of the Trade Descriptions Act.

Mrs Jacqueline Orrill of Arnold, Nottingham, booked a week's family holiday on the basis of an Intasun brochure which described the hotel as having a pool with terrace.

Sea rescue

A helicopter from the RAF base at Bawdry, South Wales, rescued 20 crew from a cargo ship in the Atlantic yesterday. The Toledo began taking in water 150 miles from the Irish coast.

Murder hunt

Two Scotland Yard detectives will leave for Kenya today to investigate the murder of Julie Ward, aged 28, whose charred remains were found in the Masai Mara Game Park in September 1988.

Mine debts

The Geevor tin mine at Land's End, Cornwall, which closed last week because of a slump in the price of tin, owes Penwith Council more than £41,000 in rates.

Charge delay

A man will appear before Barrow magistrates charged with the murder of Bertha Hemming, aged 95, who died after a fire at her house in Bedford Street, Barrow, Cumbria, in 1984. David Jack Graham, aged 22, has no fixed address.

Child killed

One child died and a second was seriously ill in hospital after neighbours tried in vain to rescue them from a fire in a flat at Greenhill Close, Barrow, Cumbria.

Man charged

A man was charged with the murder of his 10-week-old son by Liverpool magistrates. James Badley, aged 46, of Laurel Grove, Toxteth, who denies the charge, was remanded in custody for a week.

Dog attack

A boy aged six who was saved by a neighbour's Alsatian was recovering in hospital after a three-hour operation. Stephen Rye, of Bedworth, Warwickshire, received severe cuts on his head and left ear.

Truck death

A man was crushed to death when the fork-lift truck he was driving fell on him. David Watkinson, aged 23, was working at the CMB Packaging factory, in Burton Road, Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire.

REMORTGAGES



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IT COULD BE JUST AS
GOOD A MOVE.

You don't need a new house to get a new mortgage, because you can still tidy up your finances with a remortgage from the Halifax Building Society.

This lets you consolidate your existing mortgage and any top-up loans into just one loan.

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After all, more people have acted on mortgage advice from the Halifax than from any other building society.

We'll make sure you'll be as happy with a new mortgage as you would with a new home.



ANY HOME LOAN MUST BE SECURED BY A MORTGAGE. WRITTEN QUOTATIONS CAN BE OBTAINED ON REQUEST FROM YOUR LOCAL OFFICE OR HALIFAX BUILDING SOCIETY, TRINITY ROAD, HALIFAX, WEST YORKSHIRE HX1 2RG. APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE OF STANDARD LIFE WHICH IS A MEMBER OF LAUTRO.

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Labour warns BBC to resist 'bullying' in run-up to election

By Richard Evans and Philip Webster

Recent attacks on the BBC by Tory groups and newspapers could be another attempt to intimidate programme makers in the run-up to a general election, Labour party chiefs warned yesterday.

A letter reflecting the views of Mr Neil Kinnock was sent to Mr John Birt, deputy director general, insisting that "the whole process of bullying the BBC has got to be stopped in its tracks".

Mr Birt said last night that the BBC would resist firmly any undue pressure from wherever it came, but that did not mean the corporation would close its ears to criticism.

The intervention of the Labour Party follows the recent publication of a report by the Media Monitoring Unit, a right-of-centre group, and an article by Lord Wyatt in *The Times*, both of which accused Radio 4's *Today* programme of anti-Government bias.

Mr Peter Mandelson, Labour's director of campaigns and communications, wrote to Mr Birt expressing growing concern about the BBC's response to the attacks being mounted on its journalism "by the Government and Tory-supporting bodies and newspapers".

It was imperative that the BBC stood up for its editorial

independence and rebuffed the attempts being made to undermine its journalistic self-confidence, he said.

"In recent weeks, the BBC has decided to take seriously the attacks mounted by a group of right wingers with a video recorder who call themselves the Media Monitoring Unit as well as by the peer, Lord Wyatt, writing in Rupert Murdoch's papers."

"I think many would question whether it is right for the BBC to be so worried by these attacks given that both the Conservative party and Mr Murdoch have a long track record of hostility to the BBC and arguably they should not be given any credence by your response."

"It might be more appropriate simply to dismiss these attacks for what they are - attempts by bullies to subvert the BBC."

"I am particularly concerned because I fear history is repeating itself."

Mr Mandelson said he had learnt from Tory sources that the sustained and systematic attack on BBC journalism before the last general election, headed by Mr Norman Tebbit, had been carried out with the objective of intimidating the BBC and softening up programme makers prior to polling day. "My worry is

that a similar exercise is being mounted again. Since then, the BBC has faced the additional problem of its funding and very existence questioned by the Government and this threat to its future inevitably contributes to the insecurity and vulnerability of the BBC."

Mr Mandelson urged Mr Birt to spell out how the BBC intended to tackle bullying. "I hope you can convincingly describe how you are doing this so that we and the public can be reassured, before we consider what further action would be appropriate."

Mr Birt said last night: "The BBC will resist firmly any undue pressure from wherever it comes - and pressure comes from many directions. We will examine criticism carefully; we will learn from it if it is well-aimed; and we will reject it if it is not."

"As you are on occasion a complainant yourself, I trust you would not want it any other way."

The deputy director general said the BBC wanted its journalists not only to be straight, accurate, fair and impartial, but also vigorous, lively and tough-minded.

"They know the BBC will support them when they are. They will not be cowed. And nor will the BBC."

World Service computer boost

By Our Media Editor

One of the world's biggest text-handling computers has been installed at the BBC's monitoring headquarters at Caversham to keep pace with the information flowing from Eastern Europe.

The system, which can process up to 5,000 news items a day, will enable the World Service to satisfy subscribers' growing demand for information gathered from television, radio and news agency reports worldwide.

"We are already seeing a growth of business from City investment houses and stockbrokers with developing interests in Eastern Europe," Mr Barry Whitehall, general manager of BBC monitoring, said yesterday.

The computer system - part of a £10 million investment scheme opened yesterday by the Duke of Kent - has been backed up by the recruitment of an additional 14 monitoring staff.

Mr John Tusa, managing director of the World Service, said yesterday: "Such is the speed of developments in the former socialist bloc, that we shall need still more monitors to keep up."

News material is delivered to customers in

three ways: a "flash" news service is maintained round-the-clock; a 90,000-word summary of world broadcasts is published daily; and weekly economic reports on industrial, scientific and agricultural developments are distributed with a summary of world broadcasting news.

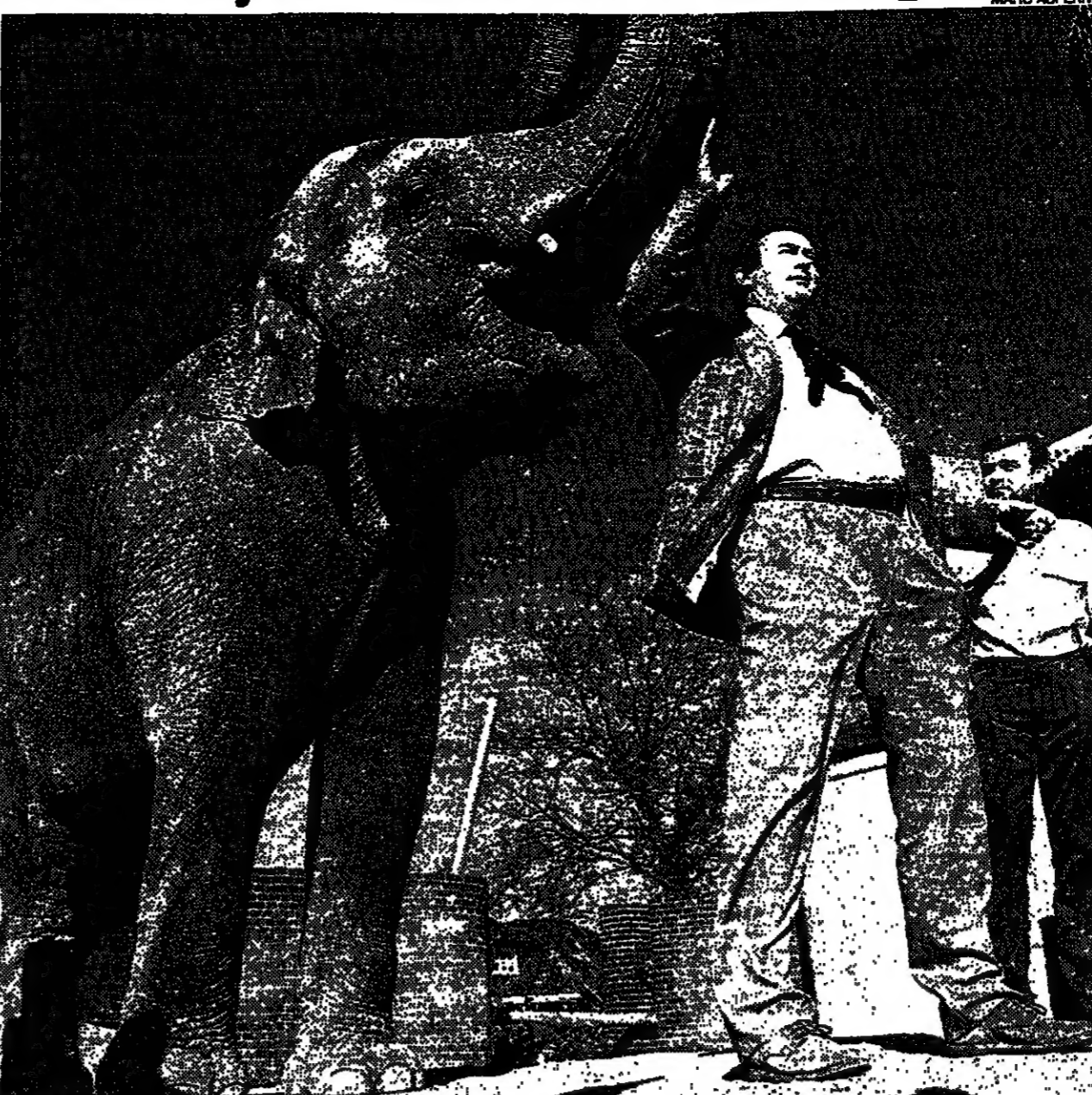
The Government is being urged to protect community radio stations from being "swallowed-up" by big networks.

"Community groups who win licences need legal protection from takeover by larger (profit-making) radio stations or other commercial companies," Mr Steve Byron, chairman of the Community Radio Association, said yesterday.

"Otherwise the UK is likely to repeat the French experience where in a matter of two years the small stations were all swallowed up by the seven large networks."

An amendment to the Broadcasting Bill drafted by the association defines a community radio body as one which pays a limited return on capital and whose assets can be transferred only to another non-profit organization.

Flamboyant defender of the elephants



Dr Richard Leakey, pictured with an Asian elephant from London Zoo, aims to raise £75 million to stop the poachers.

By Michael McCarthy, Environment Correspondent

Dr Richard Leakey, the outspoken director of the Kenyan Wildlife Service, who yesterday fiercely criticised the Government over its decision to allow the Hong Kong ivory stockpile to be traded, will in May be presenting the £5,000 Environment Award, jointly sponsored by *The Times* and BBC Radio 4's *PM* programme.

"The award is for the contribution of ordinary people, and it's ordinary people making a little bit of effort that's going to make the planet a better place," he said yesterday.

"I'm enormously impressed that *The Times* and the BBC are doing this. Conservation is increasingly an issue for the people. I think that state leadership around the world has shown that it is not particularly adept at judging

the importance of environmental issues.

"In the case of the African elephant it's the people who are going to make all the difference."

With one flamboyant gesture, Dr Leakey captured the attention of the world last year as he set about the task of saving Kenya's herds of elephant and rhinoceros from extinction at the hands of poachers.

He persuaded Mr Daniel Arap Moi, the President of Kenya, to set fire personally to the country's stockpile of confiscated ivory, worth millions of pounds.

What it lost Kenya in foreign exchange, the July ivory pyre made up for in mobilising world opinion behind the campaign to ban the ivory trade. The move was typical of Dr Leakey, the



former director of the National Museum of Kenya, who was appointed by the Kenyan government last April to take charge of the country's Wildlife Service, which is beleaguered by poachers armed with automatic weapons coming over the border from Somalia.

He has taken the war to the poachers, warning from the start that his own men would shoot to kill. In London yesterday to appeal for funds, Dr Leakey defended his policy:

"The poachers are not hungry peasants from our own country desperate to make a living," he said. "They are mercenaries who come in with AK47s and other automatic weapons. There is no reason why Kenya should allow them to plunder and destabilize, and we will not. If our patrols bump into them, they shoot."

Dr Leakey will be presenting *The Times*/BBC Environment Award in a ceremony at Broadcasting House on Tuesday May 8. Entries are now flooding in.

Nominations, which should be limited to 250 words and typewritten if possible, should be sent to: *The Times*/BBC Environment Award, PO Box 486, 1, Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. People may nominate themselves. Photographs, which are non-refundable, will help, and a daytime telephone number for the people nominated is essential.

Workmen race to save village at mercy of the sea

By Paul Wilkinson

No one will be listening to storm warnings more acutely for the next three weeks than the people of the Devon coastal hamlet of Beesands.

Until emergency repairs are completed to its sea defences the village is under threat of extinction when the next on-shore gales blow.

A neighbouring village of Hallsands was swept into the sea in similar circumstances in the great storm of 1917.

Already this winter's storms have scoured away Beesands' shingle beach to a depth of 15ft, sending the village's breakwater of huge boulders tumbling.

Workmen from the National Rivers Authority are restoring the sea wall but they do not expect to finish until well into next month.

Every day lorries bring rocks weighing up to eight tons to the village near Dartmouth but the men can work only at low tide, giving them a maximum of four hours a day. The defences were originally installed in 1979 after previous storm damage.

One of Beesands' 120 villagers, Mr Frank Crocker, aged 72, whose cottage is feet from the shoreline, said: "In the last lot of storms the sea was breaking over the road and against the houses."

"We had to board up the houses and sandbag the doors."

"If it had been allowed to go on I think we would eventually have been washed away like Hallsands was. I have lived here all my life and we have never had such a prolonged series of storms as this winter."

"If it were not for the sea defences the whole village would have gone years ago. It is a bit worrying living with the sea on our doorstep, but we are feeling safer now the boulders are being built up again."

Beesands is still used as a base for fishing in the summer, and used to have its own fishing fleet.

The villagers blame the 1917 Hallsands disaster and their own storm problems on dredging of shingle from the beach to build docks in Plymouth during the First World War.

The National Rivers Authority said that the emergency work involved the dumping of 6,000 tons of rock and was costing £100,000.

Urgent needs of the poor not met because of red tape, High Court ruling says

Judges declare Social Fund grant guidelines illegal

Government guidance limiting Social Fund payments to the poor was ruled unlawful by the High Court yesterday.

The decision is a blow to the tight budgetary control on social security payments, and Mr Nicholas Scott, the Minister for Social Security, conceded the Government would have to see whether changes were necessary. Labour's social security spokesman Mr Michael Meacher called for an end to cash limits on aid.

Lord Justice Woolf and Mr Justice Pill allowed appeals by two applicants refused grants, but dismissed a third.

Lord Justice Woolf said: "Each of the applications reveal distressing personal circumstances, involving applicants who undoubtedly have urgent needs which have not been met because of the manner in which the Social Fund has been administered."

The Government guidelines included statements that "total cost of payments made by any local office in a financial year must not exceed its budget allocation for that financial year", and that before making an award an officer had to ensure that it could be met from the budget.

Lord Justice Woolf said these were not proper guidelines because they were mandatory in tone. "If the Secretary of State is seeking to give guidance, then he must use the language of guidance and not the language of direction."

Under the 1986 Act which set up the Social Fund, there was a significant distinction between "directions" and "guidance". Guidance given by the Secretary of State for Social Services did not have to be followed, whereas direc-

Legal challenge to Clarke spending fails

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

A group of hospital consultants yesterday failed to gain a legal ruling in the High Court that Mr Kenneth Clarke, Secretary of State for Health, had acted unlawfully in spending money on National Health Service reforms in advance of legislation.

Lord Justice Woolf and Mr Justice Pill dismissed an application by Professor Harry Keen of Guy's hospital for a declaration that Mr Clarke had acted beyond his powers in allocating money to help hospitals prepare for self-governing status before the health service Bill had achieved Royal Assent.

Mr Clarke described the decision as a

unlawful "in so far as it purports to indicate that there is no power to make payments exceeding the local office allocation".

The judges then dealt with each of the three cases. Mr Samuel Stitt, an unemployed father of six, of Walsand, Tyne and Wear, had been refused a grant towards the care of two-year-old triplets while he attended an employment training scheme. Without assistance he could not attend, since his wife could

not cope alone. He was refused by a Social Fund officer on the grounds that "the law says we cannot pay for the kind of items you say that you need".

The judges said the Secretary of State did have power to issue directions to exclude certain classes of need from the scheme and for that reason Mr Stitt's application failed.

In the second case, Mr Derek Roberts, an unemployed father-of-seven from Sheffield, had applied for a £610 grant to buy household items

for his five-bedroom council house after a reconciliation with his estranged wife.

His application was refused when a local officer indicated "the budget is not adequate to sustain any payment for these items in these circumstances". The decision was upheld by an inspector.

The judge said the officers had wrongly regarded the budget as providing a "strait-jacket" for payments and Mr Roberts was entitled to a declaration that the guidelines had been unlawful.

In the third case, a man aged 19 from Sheffield who had left his parents' home after being subjected to violence was refused a grant in August 1988 to buy furniture for his council flat after a short stay in a hostel.

He was said not to fulfil the Secretary of State's criteria for someone needing "re-settlement in the community" as he had been in the hostel for less than three months, but the judges said one of the aims of the Social Fund was to help people to re-establish themselves in the community after a stay in institutional or residential care.

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money to prepare applications for a new status which had not yet become law. The Government has spent more than £60 million this year on implementing the reforms and a further £257 million has been allocated for 1990-91.

Lord Justice Woolf said the minister did not have the power under present legislation to approve an application for the new status and health authorities could not submit formal applications but there was nothing to prevent them deploying existing resources for forward planning.

Mr Justice Pill agreed in dismissing the application with costs.

"complete vindication of the Government's approach to the implementation of the NHS reforms."

Giving judgment, Lord Justice Woolf said it was clear that Mr Clarke wanted to be in a position to announce the approval of the "first wave" of self-governing NHS hospital trusts soon after the Bill was enacted. The "substantial" financial resources required for the preparations had been provided in a series of funding packages.

Professor Keen, who was "extremely concerned" at the expenditure of financial and other resources, claimed it was unlawful for Mr Clarke to spend public

money to prepare applications for a new status which had not yet become law. The Government has spent more than £60 million this year on implementing the reforms and a further £257 million has been allocated for 1990-91.

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Consultancy costs increase 1,000%

By David Walker, Public Administration Correspondent

Whitehall's use of private sector management consultants is likely to be more closely monitored after a report disclosing that spending on consultants in two departments has leapt in recent years by 1,000 per cent.

The report, an internal evaluation of the use of consultants carried out by the Departments of Health and Social Security with the assistance of the Prime Minister's personal Efficiency Adviser, shows that in 1988-89 a total of £47 million was spent.

The report is being closely studied by the Treasury and by the National Audit Office, which has been worried about consultancy costs in the past.

The report says consultants were sometimes paid up to five times the rate for civil servants doing similar work. They received £115,000 a year for work that a senior executive officer could have done on a salary of £24,000.

In 1988-89 £42 million was spent by the Department of Social Security as part of its efforts to computerize payments of income support and other social benefits.

Despite lobbying within

Whitehall by the Efficiency Unit, which believes departments respond more energetically in the face of public criticism, the results have not yet been made public.

The Department of Health said yesterday it accounted for £3.5 million of the £47 million total for 1988-89, with the rest spent by the DSS.

The report found that the work of consultants had not always been fully utilized because of "time and manpower pressure within departments".

Ten years ago, the combined Department of Health and Social Security was spending about £411,000 a year on consultants.

Inquiries by *The Times* yesterday showed that not all departments know how much they spend each year on consultants. The Ministry of Defence, for example, said its annual outlays had not been worked out.

The scrutineers say that in future top officials must think much harder about finding civil servants within Whitehall to perform the tasks for which consultants have been brought in.

'White knight' buys back carvings

By John Shaw

The rector of a tiny village church at Stowlingtoft, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, has recovered a group of rare 15th-century Flemish wooden carvings stolen from the building and smuggled to The Netherlands in 1977.

The Rev George Pattison has conducted a tireless campaign for their return and after a chequered history a Dutch "white knight" has intervened to buy them back for more than their £100,000 value. The carvings are expected to return home by Easter.

"It is absolutely marvellous news and we are all delighted," Mr Pattison said. His parishioners have raised thousands of pounds to fight the case in court. Despite help from the local diocese and English Heritage, the parish still owes legal costs of £3,000 to £4,000.

Mr Pattison, who looks after several village churches, said: "If this gentleman hadn't come along when he did, and

bought them on our behalf we would just have had to let them go. We can never thank him enough."

The carvings were made by Flemish craftsmen in about 1480. They were given to the church a century ago by the Westland-Wilsons, the local "squires" who lived at Stowlingtoft Hall.

The carvings were on display behind the altar and depicted the Passion of Christ. Detectives believe they were smuggled out of the country within hours of the theft. Police never caught the gang, believed to have been professionals based in Ireland.

The carvings were acquired by John Kingston, a filmmaker living in Amsterdam. The man who handed them over has not been seen since.

Mr Kingston had them until 1981 when they were stolen by his butler. The police were notified and his son saw the carvings in an antique shop. They had been sold to Mr Ted



Mr Pattison: His church ran up £10,000 in legal costs. Mooren, a Dutch television producer.

The dealer said he would get them back but nothing ever happened and there was no prosecution. The following year a Dutch museum official, looking through some police pictures, saw carvings she recognized as those stolen from Stowlingtoft. However Mr Mooren refused to hand them back. The Suffolk

church went to court but lost and at one stage faced a bill for up to £10,000 in costs.

Mr Pattison said: "The problem was that we would be entitled to them back under English law but, because they had been missing for more than three years, we were not entitled to them under Dutch law."

A press account of the case was seen by Mr Ran Eikeleboom who emerged as the "white knight". When Mr Mooren decided to sell the carvings last year, Mr Eikeleboom, a retired businessman, bought them on behalf of the church.

Mr Eikeleboom, aged 68, who lives at Wassenaar, near The Hague, said he could not disclose what he paid for the figures but it was more than their value.

"I am glad they are going back to the church and very happy to help, especially after all that the British did for the Dutch during the Second World War."

Impressionists scale new heights

The Impressionist market looks likely to continue prospering, judging from the results of Sotheby's sale of minor works in London yesterday. It was the best such sale to date, totalling £3.53 million, with 12 per cent of works unsold.

Eighty per cent of the buyers were private, and most were European.

The top price was for a collage of newspapers painted to resemble a dashing car by the Italian Futurist artist Mario Sironi. It caused

astonishment by fetching £236,500 against an estimate of £35,000.

"Most of his paintings of this quality are in private (Italian) collections, and can't be taken out of Italy," Miss Melanie Clore of Sotheby's said. "Also, people are very wary of fakes. This painting has been exhibited so much it is 100 per cent certain."

Bernard Buffet, the 1950s French artist whose spiky still lifes are scorned by the West but loved by the East, also performed well, a Japanese private buyer paying £126,500 (double the estimate) for "Nature Morte au Compotier", and £115,500 (estimate £25,000 to £35,000) for its fellow, "Nature Morte à la lampe à huile".

A Montmartre street scene by Utrillo was bought by another Japanese for £104,500 - £20,000 more than predicted. The authenticity of some Utrillo works has been questioned by the artist's heir, M. Jean Fabris but "Rue Saint Rustique" had been authenticated by Mr Paul Peridès, Fabris's rival, whose opinion the main auction houses accept. There was no sign of Mr Fabris at the auction.

Elsewhere in the sale Miss Clore noticed the success of "attractive, decorative, accessible, Sisley-esque paintings".

An acclaimed Victorian

painting, which was taken on a European tour in the 1890s and then disappeared, has turned up for auction at Christie's, estimated at £150,000. "The Bridge of Life" a complex work by Walter Crane shows man's journey through life, its subject ending up in his winding sheet in a black gondola destined for the Styx.

Incorporating the theological, metaphysical and biological writings of Shelley and Darwin, it is considered by Christie's "an icon of Victorian art and philosophy". The sale is on March 30.

Local authorities are using commissioned works of art as focal points in Britain's town centres, according to a report launched yesterday by Mr Peter Palumbo, chairman of

the Arts Council (Simon Tait writes).

The report, commissioned by the Public Art Forum, shows 333 new works of art were commissioned between 1984 and 1988, and that in the last five years 24 per cent of local authorities have commissioned pieces worth a total of nearly £4 million.

Sculpture, accounting for 47 per cent, was the most popular medium, and murals, mosaics, stained glass and photography were also popular.

Commissioning art for public places is in line with the Arts Council's "Percent for Art" policy which encourages local authorities and developers to commit a percentage of development budgets to commissioning and incorporating original works of art in their plans.

"It is exciting news that so many local authorities are actively working with artists and craftspeople to enhance our environment," Mr Palumbo said.

Youth

Lebanese threat of attack

UN population

Kremlin warns

Chemical war

Pakistan nuclear

Lebanese threat of attack

UN population

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Chemical war

Pakistan nuclear

Lebanese threat of attack

Youth ordered out to Ortega rally

From Charles Bremner
Managua

With the US-financed opposition breathing down its neck, Nicaragua's Sandinista leadership yesterday called out a huge crowd of supporters in a final show of strength before next Sunday's election, which has become a closely fought referendum on 11 years of semi-Leninism in America's backyard.

The hot and dusty streets of Managua, the capital, turned into a sea of red-and-black Sandinista banners as lorries and buses from the Army and state-run enterprises drove thousands of young supporters to the lakeside plaza in front of the cathedral to cheer President Ortega, the former guerrilla who is seeking his first popular mandate.

"The people will win, the people are with the Frente," Senior Ortega's voice boomed out over the rally.

Esmeralda, aged 19, showed me a leaflet from the local Sandinista committee that left little room for discussion. "Everybody out for Daniel. Nobody stays at home," it commanded.

For much of the electorate, such exhortations by the party-state have been part of life since childhood. With the voting age at 16, more than half the country's 1.7 million voters are aged under 30. It is on this group that both Government and opposition have focused their campaigning fire in the final weeks, with Señora Violeta Chamorro, the opposition candidate, promising to end military conscription and the Sandinistas depicting themselves as the party of career youth.

Yesterday it was vital for the Sandinistas, who decide the opposition as "US puppets and traitors", to upstage a rally held for Señora Chamorro in the same plaza last Sunday, when at least 50,000 people turned out for what amounted to the biggest display of public opposition to the Sandinistas since the 1979 revolution.

In their efforts to scupper the opposition rally, the Sandinistas even resorted to broadcasting rare popular shows on state television, in this case the film *Barman* and coverage of Mike Tyson's knock-out in Tokyo. Nevertheless, the size of the turnout gave a boost to Señora Chamorro's UNO coalition at the end of a last-minute campaign, and forced the Sandinistas to confront the problem of what to do if they lose.



Holding the reins: President Ortega, head of the ruling Sandinistas, campaigning on horseback as he seeks his first democratic mandate in Nicaragua.

As little as a month ago that prospect was unthinkable, with Señor Ortega's polished and powerful election machine appearing to be steam-rolling "Doña" Violeta's fragile and aristocratic campaign presence into the ground.

UNO does appear to have appealed to people's deep resentment against the Sandinistas for the havoc they have caused in a decade of war and economic mismanagement. Since the revolution the economy has shrunk by a half and 35,000 people have died in the Contra war.

Opinion polls consistently show Señora Chamorro ahead, but observers point out that, given Nicaragua's history, people are unlikely to be frank in responding to poll questions, and Señora Chamorro insists that the Sandinistas are so hated "the only way we can lose is through fraud".

In the latest survey, taken for *The Washington Post* a week ago, Señor Ortega is leading by 48 per cent to Señora Chamorro's 32 per cent. The poll also revealed

some concern over the influence of the US, with 54 per cent of respondents saying they believe Señora Chamorro would take most of her instructions from Washington.

Given the reluctance of voters to indicate their true intentions, predicting the outcome of Sunday's vote is proving exceptionally difficult, but the betting among diplomats and other foreign observers is still on Señor Ortega and his comrades.

Ask ordinary Nicaraguans why they will vote for a party that appears to have run their country into the ground and they will usually reply that the Sandinistas gave land and dignity to the poor and provided a minimum of social welfare in a land which for a long time was exploited by an Americanized upper class.

But, among more sophisticated citizens, an additional reason for supporting the Sandinistas is being propounded — the opposition, made up of 14 disparate groupings, would probably make a bigger mess.

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Señora Chamorro, on the campaign trail, showing confidence in a victory for the opposition.

Left alliance in Nepal joins reform battle

From Christopher Thomas, Kathmandu

Nepal is braced for the next violent round in "The Struggle", the name given to a mass uprising which seems certain to force changes in the Himalayan kingdom's peculiar brand of democracy.

With the refrain "Now is the time" — a slogan fast becoming a political battle cry — opposition leaders are demanding that the 30-year ban on political parties be lifted. They say that events in Eastern Europe make the democratic tide in Nepal unstoppable.

King Birendra's answer has been unequivocal: his Administration sent security forces into the streets on Sunday to break up pro-democracy protesters. Police found themselves besieged by angry mobs who rained half-bricks on them. The police opened fire, killing several men. The unofficial death toll in the troubles so far is 10.

Three top leaders of the banned Nepalese National Congress have been under house arrest since Saturday, including Mr Krishna Prasad Bhanrai, its acting president. Other officials have gone underground as government forces seek out known dissidents.

The Government says that 734 arrests have been made since the trouble broke out several days ago, a figure confirmed by international observers. The redbrick office of the National Congress, tucked away at the end of a muddy alley in the centre of Kathmandu, was completely bare yesterday. "Everybody has gone underground," a caretaker said.

There have been pro-democracy movements in Nepal before — the last in 1985 — but never anything that seemed so committed. The National Congress abandoned the 1985 protest after several bombs exploded, saying that it would not lend its name to a violent campaign. Although analogies are being drawn with the East European democracy movement, they are not entirely appropriate since Nepal is not faced with a system imposed from outside. But, without the inspiration of Eastern Europe, the move-

ment undoubtedly would not have ignited so readily.

Poverty, a crippled economy, corruption and years of political frustration have contributed to the volatile brew. A year-long trade dispute with India has added to economic hardships. There are no longer shortages of basic commodities or of petrol but they are hugely expensive.

An important ingredient that makes "The Struggle" different from other protest campaigns is the forging of an alliance last month between seven of the eight leading communist factions, now a group called the United Leftist Front.

In a remarkable display of solidarity, the Front has vowed to throw its weight behind the National Congress in a quest for multi-party democracy. It is the first time that Congress and the communists have come together.

"The Struggle" is being seriously hampered now that so many Congress and Front leaders have gone into hiding, but leaflets are being secretly spread through Kathmandu declaring this Sunday to be "Black Day" when people should wear black armbands, carry black banners and wave black flags.

A strike has been called for March 2 — the second in the campaign. The last one several days ago was widely supported, with private taxis and buses staying off the streets and shops pulling down their shutters.

Nepal operates a system of non-party elected *panchayats* (assemblies) ranging through various levels from villages to the national legislature. The system was introduced by the present monarch's father, King Mahendra, and modified by King Birendra after a 1979 referendum which many people said was rigged.

Opposition leaders want King Birendra to become a constitutional monarch subordinate to a multi-party elected legislature. The next Congress elections are due in a year, but most observers believe King Birendra will have to open negotiations with the pro-democracy movement long before then.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Lebanese flee new threat of attacks

Beirut — A child aged six was killed and thousands of Christians fled their homes in east Beirut yesterday as fears of a resumption of large-scale battles between rival Christian leaders grew amid frequent violations of a four-day ceasefire (A Correspondent writes).

Seven people were wounded by sniper-fire on the newly formed front lines between the Christian Army and Lebanese Forces Militia in heart of east Beirut. The Army, under General Michel Aoun, is demanding that Mr Samir Geagea's hardline militia pulls out from its headquarters and strongholds in the capital and merges its forces with the Army. Both men want total control of the Christian enclave in central Lebanon.

Meanwhile Palestine Liberation Organization sources in southern Lebanon confirmed that a four-man PLO delegation has been in east Beirut since Sunday to follow up a peace initiative by Mr Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman.

UN population fear

Manila (Reuters) — The world population is growing by three people a second and, unless this is curbed, most gains in improving quality of life could be swept away, the United Nations Population Fund said yesterday. Dr Nafis Sadik, its executive director, said that progress in reducing birth rates had been slower than hoped for and the population, earlier expected to stabilize at 10.2 billion by the end of the next century, could head towards 14 billion. The population, now at 5.25 billion, was growing by around 250,000 a day.

Brussels: Dr Lester Brown, a leading US environmentalist, who heads the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, said yesterday that the world faced famine from overpopulation unless families limited themselves to two children.

Kremlin warns Japan

Manila (Reuters) — Japan was conquering the world with electronics and its "flow of capital", Mr Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, said here yesterday. Moscow wanted to ensure that, in the wake of rapid change now sweeping the world, there was no renewed military threat from Japan or Germany, the other principal power defeated in the Second World War. Mr Gerasimov told a news conference that US military power in the Pacific was now out of proportion to the Soviet presence and said it was being kept high through bureaucratic momentum.

Chemical war charge

A team of West European chemical warfare experts yesterday accused the Angolan Government of using chemical weapons against its population for years while fighting Western-backed rebels (Our Foreign Staff writes). Experts from the Universities of Ghent, Madrid, Vienna and Innsbruck collected samples and examined victims in Angola before issuing a statement through Ghent University in Belgium. It said civilians had been "severely intoxicated by chemical bombs used by the Government of Luanda... No therapy could decontaminate the victims." Yesterday, rebels from the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (Unita) recaptured the key south-east district of Mavinga from government troops.

Pakistan nuclear deal

Islamabad — France has agreed to supply a nuclear power plant to Pakistan and to authorize French enterprises to negotiate a deal for the sale of the plant with Islamabad (Zahid Hussain writes). President Mitterrand of France said in Islamabad yesterday that the offer to supply the plant in Islamabad was in accordance with international regulations, would be in accordance with its peaceful use. France is the first including guarantees for its peaceful use. France is the first Western country to agree to sell nuclear plant to Pakistan despite an informal ban because of its alleged nuclear programme. M Mitterrand said that a formal agreement between the two countries would be concluded soon. Miss Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's Prime Minister, hailed the French decision as historic.

Report by State Department

China in dock on rights

From Susan Elliott, Washington, and Richard Owen, Jerusalem

The United States, in an annual report on human rights worldwide, yesterday bluntly condemned China for crushing pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square last summer and criticized Israel for continuing to abuse Palestinian rights in the occupied territories.

The strongly worded criticism of Peking is likely to provoke further antagonism between Congress and the Bush Administration over the President's decision to maintain high-level links with Peking. The Democratic-led Congress has urged Mr Bush to justify his *rapprochement* last year with China by showing the country has improved its record in return.

The report, which is prepared by the State Department for presentation to Congress, praised the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for dramatic improvements in their record on human rights last year and cautiously commended South Africa. It reserved its strongest language for the "abysmal" human rights record of Iraq and serious violations in Burma, Cuba and Syria.

The report's list of human rights infractions in China included the widespread torture of prisoners, the arrest and killing of dissidents without trial, the expulsion and harassment of foreign correspondents, and attempts by Peking to defend the military crackdown last June with a disinformation campaign.

"The human rights climate in China deteriorated dramatically in 1989," the report

said. "At least several hundred, and possibly thousands, of people were killed in Peking on June 4. The Peking massacre was followed by a drastic nationwide crackdown on participants, supporters and sympathizers."

"Thousands were arrested and about a score are known to have been executed, following trials which fell far short of international standards, for alleged crimes committed during the unrest... At year's end the crackdown was still continuing."

Mr Richard Schifter, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, was due to

submit the report to the House and Senate yesterday. It is intended to help Congress consider requests from foreign countries for US aid, but is also used to assess whether a country deserves preferential trade links with the United States.

Congress does not automatically cut aid in response to a critical report on a country. On Israel, which with about \$3 billion (£1.76 billion) a year is the largest recipient of US

aid, the State Department said: "The human rights situation in the occupied territories remains a source of deep concern." More Palestinians died last year, the second year of the *intifada*, than in 1988. The report acknowledged that there was a "significant increase of violence by Palestinians against other Palestinians".

Israel yesterday issued a weary self-defence, saying that, unlike other Middle Eastern states, it was "doing its best" to observe the rule of law. The Army had a duty to maintain order and counteract the "violence and terror" of the *intifada* while diplomatic negotiations to achieve a settlement were under way.

The US described the Soviet Union as witnessing "a remarkable opening-up of the political process" during the presidency of Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, but said it still had "a considerable distance to go" before it would meet international standards.

The report said the human rights record of Iraq "remained abysmal in 1989" because its Government "arbitrarily arrested or detained" several thousand people, including opposition leaders, and virtually outlawed freedom of speech.

The report said that Vietnam's human rights abuses last year included "brutal treatment of persons, arbitrary detentions, absence of fair trials, denial of privacy, and severe restrictions on freedom of speech and press, assembly and association".

Red tape's secret 'army'

From Philip Jacobson
Paris

When the ordinary citizens of France fall behind with contributions to the national health service, a short, sharp reminder drops through their letter-box.

When the Ministry of Defence is found to have neglected to make its statutory payments on behalf of 150,000 civil servants for 45 years, a deal is hastily patched up to cover official embarrassment.

By some reckonings, the Ministry now owes Secu, France's social security authority, a cool 90 billion francs (£9 billion) — not far short of half of last year's defence budget. In the event, the Government's accounting watchdog, the Cour des Comptes, has delivered a bill for about 8 billion francs.

The French are indebted for these revelations to *Le Canard Enchaîné*, a weekly newspaper which is the scourge of the political establishment. According to the magazine, the

Ministry of Defence was nailed after an investigation lasting several years. It began when a senior official at Secu noticed that the annual cheque the Government hands over for all its employees covered 150,000 fewer people than the number paying their own share of contributions.

The computer trail led investigators to the Defence Ministry, where it was quickly established that this army of *fonctionnaires* had disappeared within the bureaucracy. When the error was discovered and Secu asked for its missing billions, *Le Canard* reports, the Finance Ministry demanded a detailed bill going back for almost half a century.

And where was the information? The Ministry of Defence, which regards the number of people it employs as an official secret, refused to co-operate with the Cour des Comptes. To avoid deadlock, says the magazine, it was eventually decided to allow the Defence Ministry's accountants to come up with a suitable sum.

A DEMOCRATIC NICARAGUA IN A DEMOCRATIC WORLD?

"We the undersigned call upon the Nicaraguan Government to fulfil its pledge to conduct the forthcoming elections of 25 February in an atmosphere of freedom and toleration, and to respect the outcome of the elections as a true reflection of the will of the Nicaraguan people. We also hope that the British Government, working with other major powers from both East and West, will help ensure that the election results are followed by a smooth transition of all elements of the present regime's state apparatus to a new and freely elected government, constitutionally separating party and state, with guarantees of an independent judiciary and legislature."

We hope that the present election will allow Nicaragua to join the ever-growing group of democratic nations that are now emerging throughout the world."

Alex Aiken <i>National Student Director, Conservative College Party</i>	Prof. Harry Ferns	Steven Norris MP
Rt Hon Julian Amery MP	Prof. Antony Flew	Dr Patrick J O'Sullivan
Dr Nigel Ashford	George Gardiner MP	Malcolm Pearson
David Atkinson MP	Sir Eldon Griffiths MP	Prof. Anthony Polanski
Andrew Bowden MP	Peter Griffiths MP	Keith Raffan MP
Chris Brand	Dr Alexandra Hardie	Prof. David Regan
Christopher Butler MP	Neil Hamilton MP	Graham Riddick MP
Vladimir Bukovsky	David Hart	Marion Roe MP
Robert Chambers <i>General Secretary, International Society for Human Rights</i>	Gerald Hartup <i>Campaign Director, Freedom Association</i>	Cllr. Richard Romain
Anthony Coombs MP	Paul Helm	David Shaw MP
The Baroness Cox	Prof. John Hibbs OBE	Steven Stunbury <i>Chairman, National Association of Conservative Graduates</i>
Brian Crozier	Michael Knowles MP	Hugo Sumneron MP
The Viscount St Davids	Prof. David Marsland	Andrew Tinney
Prof. Christie Davies	Dr Kent Matthews	Neil Thorne OBE TD MP
Prof. Donald R Denman	Terry McNeill	John Townend FCA MP
Timothy Devlin MP	Norris McWhirter CBE	Dr Michael Turner
Cllr. Sarah Dines	Prof. Patrick Minford	Philip Vander Elst
Dr Kevin Dowd	Ezra J Mishan	Ray Whitney OBE MP
Den Dover MP	Christopher Monckton	Ann Winterton MP
Cllr. Stephen Eyre	Cllr. Stephen Morrison	Nicholas Winterton MP
	Emma Nicholson MP	Dr Mike Woodcock MP

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Capitalist trail-blazers in East find it an uphill journey

From Roger Boyes
Warsaw

The Marriott Hotel in Warsaw is a shining temple of doom.

Western-built, it boasts the usual cocktail lounges and cafes, and rooms at \$160 (£94) a night — about four months' wages for the average Pole.

Here the privateers of Eastern Europe hole up, drawing elaborate flow charts for the ultimate destruction of the communist economy.

Sir William Kyrie of the International Finance Corporation comes in one door. Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard through another, a team of crewcut World Bank men are at brunch — cost per serving 75,000 zlotys, a week's salary for a Polish teacher — and the glazed enthusiasm, the bubbling missionary talk, is indistinguishable from the squalls of transcendental meditators and Jehovah's Witnesses who have also arrived to save Poland from itself. The road from serfdom to the

free market leads up a steep gradient. There are only a handful of business machines in Poland, and they blink and stutter like neurological case-studies.

It was sad to see a French merchant banker, on the brink of a deal that would revolutionize Warsaw's refuse collection, trying to send a fax to Paris from the central post office.

The single machine had broken down again, would perhaps be fixed by the afternoon, but would then have to cope with three days' backlog of unsent messages. Try the Holiday Inn fax, advised a British accountant (consultancy fee: £350 a day plus expenses), but at 2am when the night clerks are more lenient and the lines less cluttered.

The phones are, of course, hopelessly overloaded, though various Western lobbyists have been trying to sell Warsaw a new exchange. Dialling from a northern Warsaw district, to the centre of the capital, or across the Vistula is difficult; impossible, but difficult. Better by far to privatize Poland from the safety of

the new Western-style hotels.

The free market Solidarity-led Government and the privatizing ministers of Hungary have drawn up elaborate route maps to the market economy, and by the time they are taken by courier to the Western consultants in their air-conditioned shelters, they look like a credible basis for business.

Few visiting Westerners stray into factories. When they do, the shock is often terminal. Mrs Barbara Piasecka-Johnson, the Polish-born baby-soap millionaire, was emotionally committed to rescuing the Gdansk shipyards. With a phalanx of lawyers and accountants, she made half a dozen flying visits.

The gap between the logically correct solution (a streamlined, privately owned yard, computerized management, automated welding) and the Dantesque reality (rusting hulks, abandoned hulks, workers using worn-out 1970s equipment) was so large, so unbridgeable, that even the charitable Mrs Johnson had to retreat.

Her accountants valued the yards at between \$3 million and \$6 million. The management and workers thought the assets worth \$40 million. The workers wanted a solid dollar-based salary. Mrs Johnson sought to put money into modernization, not wage packets. She wanted a strike ban, the workers grumbled. For the time being, she feels more comfortable in New Jersey.

The evaluation of state-owned assets is the crucial issue, and points to some of the weaknesses of the Western experts who are parachuting into the East. Too many of the Western advisers are in business on their own account and therefore have an interest in underestimating the value of factories up for sale.

Mr Krzysztof Lis, the Polish Government's plenipotentiary, suspended the privatization of Polish Records, the Warsaw Television Enterprise, which is being advised by Mr Philip Mayo of the British National Freight Corporation, the Fiat coalmine and 70 other ventures.

These projects will hang fire until a new privatization law is settled. Mr Lis says he will only allow the privatization of companies that do not hold a monopoly, have a convincing development plan, have prepared a two-year analysis of operations under the new tax conditions, and are committed to market pricing.

There are Western scouts everywhere, easily identified by their tendency to buy foxfur hats that shed hair on otherwise immaculate Brooks Brothers suits.

They are heading mainly for Poland and Hungary, but they can be spotted in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and even Romania. In East Berlin, businessmen outnumber spies for the first time since the war.

The most helpful advice agency has probably been the International Finance Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank. It is good at hooking up finance and identifying natural targets for privatization. But even such an international body has its preferences — it

does not seem very keen about worker ownership — and the new governments are beginning to realize that they have to feel the way through the maze by themselves. There are no precedents for this kind of transition from planned to market economy.

The following conversation was overheard in the Warsaw Marriott. Western consultant (full of vim): "You could offer shares to the workers instead of wage increases."

Polish executive (doubtfully): "Yes, possibly."

Consultant: "And they could sell them at the market rate and you would get a better idea of your real worth. That's the way it works."

Executive: "We don't have a stock market."

Consultant: "Oh, dear."

Executive: "But we have a noticeboard in the factory. Workers could pin up their offers there, couldn't they?"

Consultant (somewhat doubtfully): "Yes." (Pause) "Do you have pins?"

Havel wants peace conference to end post-war divisions

From Martin Fletcher, Washington

President Havel of Czechoslovakia, addressing an enraptured Congress here yesterday, called for a "peace conference" to end the post-war divisions in Europe and to create a new pan-European structure which would devise its own security system.

He said the scheduled 1992 Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe should be brought forward to assume that role.

The conference should "put a formal end to the Second World War and all its unhappy consequences" and should draw up a treaty to guarantee the borders of all European states, he said.

Mr Havel added that the new pan-European structure should incorporate a unified, democratic Germany, and the security system should embrace both NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.

But he denied reports that he wanted "to dissolve the Warsaw Pact tomorrow and NATO the day after". Czechoslovakia owed its very existence to NATO, he said.

He nevertheless looked to the day when Europe once again assumed a single identity and was "compelled to be a divided army no longer", when the old bipolarity gave way to a new "era of multipolarity".

Europe would take responsibility for its own security, deciding for itself how many of whose troops it wanted in its territories.

"For another hundred years American soldiers should not have to be separated from their mothers just because Europe is incapable of being a guarantor of world peace," he said. "Sooner or later, Europe must recover and come into its own."

In a speech punctuated by regular ovations, Mr Havel, a playwright and former dissident, referred to the "nightmares" of living under Soviet rule and described the recent upheavals in Eastern Europe as "historically irreversible".

"Our freedom, independence, and our new-born democracy have been purchased at great cost and we



Mr Havel: Looking to an era of "multi-polarity".

it will be, not just for Czechs and Slovaks, but for the whole world."

BRUSSELS: Support for East Europe will cost the European Community an extra £1.4 billion over the next three years, with Britain asked to contribute £238 million, according to figures presented here (Michael Binyon writes).

Britain has indicated it is willing to pay the extra money, but is strongly opposed to any extra funding for

Latin America and more spending on environmental protection, transport, the audio-visual sector, energy and vocational training, which Brussels is also proposing.

Herr Peter Schmidhuber, the Budget Commissioner, said that, after a review of the financial perspectives until 1992, the Commission proposed spending an extra 500 million European currency units (ecus) — £355 million — to help reform in Eastern Europe this year, 850 million ecus next year and a billion ecus in 1992.

It also wanted to spend an extra 2.4 billion ecus over the next three years in aid to Latin America, the Mediterranean region and Asia, and 1.2 billion ecus for internal policies strongly supported by the European Parliament.

He said this rise would be within the framework of the 1988 inter-institutional agreement. It was also below the ceiling of less than 0.03 per cent of the Community's gross national product which allows ministers to take a decision by majority vote.

Although the money is additional to what was proposed earlier, it is offset by a fall in the cost of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Britain argues that Eastern Europe is a special case, as events there could not have been foreseen. But it says there is no reason now to increase spending for other parts of the world or on pet projects of the European Parliament, which should have made out its case when the financial estimates were being drawn up.

Brussels revised its 1990 budget only in December, setting aside 300 million ecus in aid to Poland and Hungary this year.

But this figure has been increased after urgent requests for similar aid from other reforming East European nations — Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia.

Some 200 million of the 500 million ecus now proposed have still to be approved by EC ministers and the European Parliament.

Kohl comes up against some obstacles to reunification



A crowd in Erfurt, East Germany, welcomes Herr Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, yesterday at the start of the election campaign for three parties linked to his own Christian Democrats. East Germany goes to the polls on March 18.

Germans slacken the pace

From Ian Murray
Bonn

The stampede towards German reunification seems to have slowed since Mrs Thatcher complained about its pace last weekend.

Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the West German Foreign Minister, acknowledged yesterday that the Soviet Union may still insist on an agreement by the four victorious Second World War powers before reunification can take place. Domestically, Herr Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, is now talking less of speeding the process and more of the long list of complex reforms required to achieve economic and monetary union.

Significantly, Herr Hans Klein, his spokesman, said yesterday that "the Chancellor has never said that reunification could happen this year".

The Foreign Minister was responding to an interview with *Pravda* given by President Gorbachev. The Soviet leader said his country, along with Britain, the United States and France, would retain special responsibility for the future of Germany in the absence of peace treaties between Germany and the countries it fought against.

Herr Genscher agreed in a radio interview that the Soviet leader wanted to involve the four powers in the arrangements of the process.

He did not believe that President Gorbachev had yet reached a conclusion on how reunification should be achieved, but that there was no question that the Soviet President now supported it.

The Foreign Minister said the interview with *Pravda* confirmed in substance the impression gained by Herr Kohl that Moscow considered that it was up to the German people to work out the details.

Herr Genscher admitted that the interview also highlighted the psychological fears in the Soviet Union over the issue of a united Germany. For this reason, he said, it was important to consider the views of every party so that the concept of reunification should be acceptable to all.

Leading article, page 15

Steel city a testament of failure

From A Correspondent, Eisenhüttenstadt, East Germany

Forty years ago, the founding fathers of East Germany created this steel town on a plain near the Polish border, proudly calling it "the first socialist city". It was to be a prototype of the way in which Germans would make communism work.

Today "Ironworks town" — which is what its name means — is a desolate testament to the failure of the central planning system to keep pace with industrial development.

Its broad but dirty streets and modern but dilapidated housing for 54,000 inhabitants are evidence that the state is bankrupt. The red banners and communist party slogans are gone from Lenin Alley, the main street through the bleak town centre. They are replaced by campaign posters pasted up by the nation's new opposition parties.

The grand notion was to use Soviet ore. Polish coke

and German sweat to create the pride of East German socialism," says Herr Kurt Jäger, a long-time resident. "It turned out to be a colossal socialist misadventure."

Although workers here enjoy better housing than many of their compatriots in rotting apartment buildings elsewhere, residents still trudge past bleak residential sites that are cracked and crumbling from decades of neglect.

The air reeks of emissions from the sprawling EKO foundry and steel mill on the town's northern edge and from the gritty smoke spewing from thousands of unfiltered coal-fired residential boilers.

Concern over an uncertain future has also added to residents' woes, as the East German economy verges on collapse and reunification looms. Residents share a growing East German fear that reunification will bring them

further processing, EKO officials say that it will be difficult to find a company in the West interested in keeping the plant running.

The town's fledgling Social Democratic Party branch is campaigning hard on a platform pledging social and financial support to cushion workers and their families during the difficult reunification process. "We have to make sure that people are not ruined by unemployment, price increases and currency reform," says Herr Matthias Onika, first secretary of the branch. But he admits that East Germany is effectively powerless and that help will have to come from Bonn.

The newly founded party, scarce of resources, faces an uphill battle in the March 18 elections. But Herr Onika is confident. "No one has forgotten who created this national catastrophe," he explains.

For years, EKO has been forced by its technological backwardness to export its iron to West Germany, where it was turned into finished steel and shipped back east for

further processing. EKO officials say that it will be difficult to find a company in the West interested in keeping the plant running.

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Moscow inquiry into anti-Jewish article

From Mary Dejevsky, Moscow

The Moscow judiciary is to investigate the recent publication of anti-Semitic material in a student newspaper, the Soviet media revealed yesterday. According to a spokesman for the Moscow prosecutor's office, this is the first time criminal proceedings have been instituted over an anti-Semitic publication in the Soviet capital.

The investigation relates to a recent article in the student magazine of the Moscow Energetics Institute, *Energetik*, which incorporated a political programme purporting to come from the extreme nationalist Pamyat organization. It called, among other things, for the total "de-Zionization" of Russia and for Jews to be banned from higher education and the Communist Party, as well as from state and government posts.

The publicity given to the investigation — it was reported by the weekly, *Liternaya Gazeta*, and by Tass — seems intended to reassure Jews in Moscow that their interests will be protected.

The anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan last month sparked off rumours that nationalist groups in other Soviet cities, including Moscow and Leningrad, were planning imminent attacks on Armenians, Jews and other ethnic groups. Jewish groups

have been additionally scared by rumours that Russian nationalists will try to force them out of the country, now that the United States has withdrawn political refugee status for Soviet Jewish immigrants and so (in their view) made it more difficult for them to emigrate.

Yesterday, too, the Interior Ministry issued the latest in a series of official statements denying that anti-Jewish pogroms were taking place. It refuted claims in a Kiev newspaper that a number of flats belonging to Jews had been attacked in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov — insisting that these were ordinary burglaries — and said that the case of a fire at the central writers' house in Moscow was still under investigation.

The fire on January 18, which has become known as the TSDU affair after the Russian title of the Central Writers' House, arouses strong passions. *Vzglyad*, one of Moscow television's most glasnost-minded programmes, last week broadcast what it claimed was an amateur video of the incident.

This showed the outbreak of extensive violence after an anti-Semitic speech at a meeting organized by the Russian Writers' Union. The commentary argued that the riot had been planned in advance

by extreme Russian nationalists, who had positioned themselves strategically in the audience. It cited the fact that some of those involved were not members of the union and had been admitted to the meeting without identification cards, despite strict security.

While there is general acceptance that extreme Russian nationalists — whether in Moscow (Reuters) — Tiberius kills more than 21,000 Soviet citizens a year, victims of an abandoned campaign to eradicate the disease, a medical newspaper said yesterday. The newspaper *Meditsinskaya Gazeta*, published partly by the Ministry of Health, said that decades after nearly eradicating the disease a lack of funding coupled with indifference by health officials had wiped out the earlier gains.

writers in the heat of the moment, or paid thugs — were responsible for the violence and subsequent burning down of the TSDU building, there is no agreement on precisely which group might have been responsible. The Russian Writers' Union is a haven of nationalist sentiment, but would not normally express it except on paper.

Popular wisdom blames Pamyat, but Mr Dmitri

Vasilyev, its leader, denies that his organization had any part in what happened and has consistently dissociated his group from violence. He also denies that his branch of Pamyat was responsible for the political programme published in *Energetik* and now under investigation.

He blames a Pamyat break-away group, led by a certain Konstantin Smirnov-Ostonskiy, both for the programme and for the TSDU affair. He also claims that the alternative Pamyat has high-level connections with the KGB and the Moscow local government, both of which use it to discredit the original Pamyat.

Pamyat is certainly riven with dissension and its activity is shrouded in rumour. When one of the alternative Pamyat's leaders, Mr Yevgeni Yevseyev — who was also vice-president of the Russian-Palestinian Association — died after being run over on the Moscow ring road 10 days ago, the traffic police issued an immediate statement saying he had not been murdered. Asked about Mr Yevseyev's untimely death, Mr Vasilyev was quoted as saying: "He who lives like a dog dies like a dog."

Whatever the ins and outs of the Pamyat organization and its splinter group or

groups, a criminal investigation — however pioneering — is unlikely to calm Moscow's worried Jews. Having seen that the authorities in Baku were unable or unwilling to defend Armenians against attack and having been brought up on tales of the pre-revolutionary pogroms, many prefer not to put Moscow's pledge of protection to the test and seek emigration instead.

WASHINGTON: Mr William Webster, the director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, has said that the crisis in the Soviet Union is likely to be long and painful and that intelligence-gathering remained critical, despite the easing of East-West tensions (Reuters reports). "The crisis we now see in the USSR will likely be deep and prolonged," Mr Webster said in remarks prepared for delivery to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Relations.

In an unusually blunt public statement, the CIA director painted a bleak picture of President Gorbachev's plight in promoting his bold agenda of reforms.

"The new system he is trying to create is not yet ready to take the place of the old one he is discarding... the future will be no less difficult or painful."

Western scholars granted access to Nazi records

From James Bone, New York

For the past 45 years, tens of millions of pages of captured Nazi documents from the Second World War have been gathering dust in Soviet and Eastern European archives.

Soon this huge cache of information about the German occupation of Eastern Europe, rich in details about the Third Reich's use of forced labour, the extent of local collaboration with the Nazis, and the names of victims of the Holocaust, will be available to scholars in the West.

The US Holocaust Memorial Council, a branch of the US Government, has reached a series of agreements that will enable it to begin microfilming the Nazi records for Western archives.

The council began filming in Polish archives last week and plans to start in the Soviet Union this summer. The monumental task is expected to take at least a decade. "It will certainly be a treasure trove because these documents have never been used before," Mr Brewster Chamberlain, the Holocaust Council's chief archivist, said. "They will reinforce facts we have not been able to prove before."

Scholars are only now

beginning to assess the size and importance of the material. Professor Raul Hilberg, of the University of Vermont, is one of the world's leading experts on captured German documents. He estimates that there are 100 million pages in 70 Soviet archives alone, and more elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

So far, experts from the Holocaust Council have surveyed only eight Soviet archives. In recent months, agreements permitting access to archives have also been reached with Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland. Negotiations are under way with Yugoslavia, but political instability has thwarted similar efforts in Bulgaria and Romania.

"There are a huge amount of German records — records created by the occupation authorities — and they deal with everything from planning tobacco in the Ukraine to the actions of the Einsatzgruppen killing squads," Mr Chamberlain said.

A team of US experts visited several Soviet archives last month and got a taste of the kind of revelation that will emerge from the material.

Professor Lewis Siegelbaum

of Michigan State University, a leading Soviet specialist, said he had been surprised by the depth of collaboration, which involved not merely military co-operation, but also cultural activities, the creation of Nazi-sponsored anti-Bolshevik committees, and even the hitherto unknown creation of a German-inspired Belorussian volunteer army in 1944.

"The degree of co-operation by elements of the local population has been far greater than has hitherto been known," he said. "It would put in the order of 20 to 40 per cent of the population. Although I would not necessarily say it was enthusiastic."

Professor Siegelbaum made his most gruesome find at the archives in Kharkov in central Ukraine, where he uncovered evidence of the extermination of almost the entire Jewish population of the town in 1941, while it was under German occupation.

A census conducted by the Nazis classified the town's 240,000 residents by nationality. The 9,600 Jews were listed on special yellow paper. Three days later 8,900 of them were rounded up and taken to a tractor factory on the outskirts of the town and shot.

Roman to ban a new

Security

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CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE

Romania struggles to banish fears of a new police state

From Christopher Walker, Bucharest

The provisional Romanian Government yesterday launched a belated campaign to convince a sceptical public that the vast surveillance network run by Nicolae Ceausescu's feared Securitate was being dismantled.

The move came in response to widespread fears that the network, including 700,000 paid informers and an army of cave-diggers in every telephone exchange in the country, had quietly been transferred to the control of the ruling National Salvation Front, which many people regard as a cover for the old-style Communists.

In another development, Mr Corneliu Coposu, the leader of Romania's main right-wing opposition group, the National Peasant Party, said last night that one of the party's members had been murdered and tortured while pinning up a party poster in the region of Moldavia.

Mr Coposu, aged 74, a former political prisoner, claimed that the killing, on February 8, was part of a dirty tricks campaign and that it had been accompanied by attacks on 25 of the party's regional offices in recent weeks. He said leading members of his party had been subjected to repeated telephone and written death threats, some from groups describing themselves as Communists.

The alleged murder victim was president of the right-wing

party's organization in the village of Rosior in Moldavia and a member of the district bureau.

The campaign for Romania's election on May 20 is certain to be the dirtiest fought in Eastern Europe. The offices of the ruling National Salvation Front, the favourite to win the poll, were ransacked by a mob on Sunday, which Front leaders claimed had been organized by the National Peasant Party.

The two have a long history of political enmity stretching back to the 1946 election when the National Peasant Party claimed, wrongly, that the Communists who, they now allege, form the bulk of the Front's leadership. A year later, the National Peasant Party was outlawed by the Communists and has only been revived in the wake of the December revolution.

The new pledge to Romanians about the dismantling of the Securitate's surveillance system, contained in a detailed statement by General Victor Stanculescu, the new Minister of Defence, is meant to reassure Romanians who, even two months after the revolution, mostly remain convinced that their telephones are tapped and who still talk in whispers in restaurants and public places.

The minister, himself a target for telephone tapping when he served Ceausescu as First Deputy Defence Min-

ister, said: "The specific tapping equipment is in the process of being destroyed." It had been disconnected on December 22, he said.

The statement was accompanied in the daily *Timisul Liber* with revelations of the extent of Ceausescu's cave-dropping. The paper discovered that in addition to thousands of dissidents, Ceausescu had bugged most leading members of his own Government and many of his own close relatives, including his eldest son, Valentin, now in jail awaiting trial.

Ceausescu's wife, Elena, is reported to have ordered the secret videotaping of the sexual exploits of members of her own family, including her daughter, Zoe, who is also under arrest.

"You could say that under Ceausescu repression was the only part of our national life that was pursued efficiently," Professor Silviu Brucan, the Front's chief ideologue has explained.

In his statement, the general promised that the new security structure his ministry was setting up would not be placed "at the disposal of any party or political group".

He said all leading members of the Securitate, numbered in thousands, had been retired, including all heads and deputy heads of departments. "Those guilty of committing crimes are under arrest and being investigated by the military prosecutor."

Albanians challenge Kosovo crackdown



Defiant ethnic Albanian youths in the troubled Yugoslav province of Kosovo after building a barricade of rocks across a road in the town of Vucitrn yesterday. Armoured military units had been patrolling the streets after the authorities imposed a night curfew in response to the violent campaign for regional autonomy.

Hungary 'may join political wing of Nato'

From Ernest Beck, Budapest

Mr Gyula Horn, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, has for the first time raised the possibility that Hungary, a Warsaw Pact member with 50,000 Soviet troops still stationed on its territory, could eventually join the political wing of Nato.

Speaking to a meeting of political scientists and foreign affairs experts from Hungary's main political parties, Mr Horn said that to create a common European house of defence and security on the continent was needed, which would require closer contact between Hungary and Nato.

"It therefore cannot even be excluded that Hungary could become a member of Nato's political wings," he said.

While not advocating withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, Mr Horn endorsed the idea that it should evolve from a military to a purely political organization with only "consultative" functions, and that Nato forces should be dismantled and defence tasks returned to member states.

He did not rule out the possibility of a gradual convergence or merger of Nato and the Warsaw Pact.

Although the proposal cannot be considered official Hungarian foreign policy, it marks a dramatic change of thinking for Mr Horn, who until recently had argued for

maintaining both military blocs until they could be disbanded simultaneously — an idea, he told the meeting, which was now "an illusion" because of the rapid pace of political change in Europe.

Because Hungary does not have a common border with any Nato country, it has been considered of lesser strategic importance for the Warsaw Pact, a fact which may lead Hungary to become the first member to leave it.

Mr Horn's statement took many by surprise, including Mr Ferenc Karpati, the Defence Minister, who said that he would have to study the text before commenting.

It is believed that Mr Horn,

a candidate for the Socialist Party in next month's multi-party elections, might be trying to reshape his party's foreign policy along the lines of the increasingly popular opposition which advocates a strong "back to Europe" strategy, and in many cases, a Hungarian withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and a declaration of neutrality.

A distinct anti-Soviet tinge has surfaced in some campaign posters, including one from the centrist Democratic Forum which shows the menacing back and burl neck of a Soviet soldier with the slogan "It is all over".

Mr Horn, who is considered the architect of Hungary's

landmark decision last summer to allow East Germans the right to cross Hungary to the West, is well respected at home and abroad, but his Socialist Party, which split from the former Hungarian Socialist Workers (communist) Party last October, has seen its popularity plunge in recent polls.

Meanwhile, Mr Ferenc Somogyi, the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, announced yesterday that talks with Soviet experts on a pull-out of Soviet forces from Hungary will continue next Wednesday with an agreement likely before the middle of March, just weeks before the Hungarian elections.

South African 'dirty tricks'

Security net under fire

From Nicholas Beeson, Johannesburg, and Gavin Bell, Cape Town

The powerful security apparatus in South Africa, which reached its zenith under Mr P.W. Botha, the former President, is beginning to fall apart after a wave of recent disclosures of "dirty tricks" operations by the military, police and intelligence services.

The latest revelations came in *The Star* newspaper in Johannesburg yesterday as President de Klerk, Mr Botha's successor, prepared to announce, probably today or tomorrow, that he is to meet leaders of the African National Congress to pave the way for a new power-sharing arrangement.

In yesterday's reports, high-ranking officials were allegedly linked to a secret hit squad. They include General Magnus Malan, the Defence Minister, General Jannie Geldenhuys, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, and General Wilkop Badenhorst, the chief of military intelligence.

The Star said the three men and several other senior officers were directly in command of the so-called Civil Co-operation Bureau, which investigators have blamed for the assassinations of Mr David Webster, a left-wing academic, and Mr Anton Lubowski, the Swapo lawyer in Namibia.

The accusations have led opposition parties of the left and right to call in Parliament for General Malan to resign. He has admitted the existence of the Bureau, but denies ordering assassinations.

Since coming to power last

year, Mr de Klerk has attempted to control the so-called "securocrats" in the military establishment who were allowed to operate largely independently of the Cabinet and Parliament.

After their withdrawal from Namibia, which is about to become independent, the South African Defence Force has had its activities severely



General Malan: Denies that he ordered assassinations, restricted and faces huge budget cuts.

In the greatest challenge yet to the generals in the military and police forces, the Government has authorized the Harms Commission to inquire into the hit-squad allegations. The inquiry was originally launched after Mr Dirk Kotze, a former police captain, revealed his involvement in assassinations of blacks suspected of being ANC members.

But the scope of the investigation has now broadened to include the killings by the Bureau, which were alleg-

edly carried out by four former members of the country's top crime-fighting team — the murder and robbery squad at Brixton, a Johannesburg inner-city suburb.

One former policeman is being held under the Internal Security Act, and Lieutenant-Colonel Staal Burger, the squad's former commander, is said to be on the run.

The issue of Mr de Klerk's meeting with the ANC was discussed at a Cabinet meeting in Cape Town yesterday, but no statement was issued. An informed source said that the Government was still awaiting an official letter from the ANC requesting a meeting.

The source expected an announcement before the President flies to Zaire on Saturday for talks with other African heads of state.

Mr Walter Sisulu, the veteran ANC activist, said a letter would be sent soon. The organization said at the weekend that it would send a high-ranking delegation to discuss its preconditions for negotiations, notably an end to the state of emergency and the release of all political prisoners.

The ANC has now appealed to the Organization of African Unity to prevent the conference in Zaire, saying that it runs counter to OAU resolutions on South Africa, but Pretoria is confident that the meeting will go ahead. President Mobutu of Zaire, Rwanda's head of state, and possibly those of Burundi and Gabon, are expected to attend.

Maude ends Hanoi talks without boat people deal

By Andrew McEwen, Diplomatic Editor

Mr Francis Maude, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, left Hanoi yesterday after four days of talks without an agreement to carry out more mandatory repatriation flights of Vietnamese boat people.

Whitehall sources denied that this amounted to a setback in Britain's attempts to bring about the repatriation of the boat people by mandatory as well as voluntary methods.

The two sides agreed that the problem in Hong Kong could not be resolved by voluntary methods alone, and said they would try to reach an accord by the end of the month. The British understanding was that this would include mandatory flights, but there was no confirmation from the Vietnamese side.

The sources said it could not be argued that Mr Maude had failed in his main objective, as talks were to continue through diplomatic channels.

Both sides have always been in favour of expanding the existing voluntary repatriation scheme, and agreed that

it should be stepped up to 1,000 people a month from the beginning of May.

Britain agreed to help pay for a new reception centre for returning boat people at a cost estimated by the sources at about \$150,000 (£100,000).

Mr Maude said the higher rate of voluntary repatriation would come into effect by May and described it as "a substantial increase". But it was seen by observers as a climbdown, because Britain has held out for months against switching the emphasis to voluntary methods.

The United States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Scandinavian countries have insisted that the voluntary scheme should be given time to work, and mandatory repatriation should be only a last resort. This has also been described by some as forcible repatriation, but the British Government argues that this is an inaccurate description.

A shift in the British emphasis emerged yesterday when

Mr Maude spoke to reporters after his second meeting with Mr Nguyen Co Thach, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister.

Until now, UK sources have argued that the world community was close to accepting the principle of mandatory repatriation — based on the outcome of a meeting in January of the 29-nation Conference on Indo-China Refugees in Geneva, when all nations except the US and Vietnam backed a compromise. This would have allowed mandatory repatriation flights to resume in the summer.

But Mr Maude yesterday put a different light on the outcome of the Geneva meeting: "We all agreed that there should be a date... not at which mandatory repatriation should begin but at which it could begin again. It would only be necessary for us to seek a non-voluntary repatriation if those measures on (speeding up) voluntary repatriation did not come to fruition."

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At Ford, we pride ourselves on our ability to listen to what you, the driver, has to say.

This policy has brought about yet another sweeping round of improvements and refinements to the entire Sierra-Sapphire range, including the luxurious 2000E.

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The Sierra LX.

Replaces the Sierra L for the same price as the L.

Whatever happened to the 'L'? We've simply replaced it with the Sierra LX. This car has many more features than the 'L'. Specifically, these are power front windows, an adjustable steering column, a 'lights-on' warning buzzer, tachometer, instrument panel dimmer, luxury velour trim, sports seats, anti-theft alarm, remote fuel filler/boot release, centre console with arm rest stowage, rear courtesy light, courtesy light delay and four spoke steering wheel. Phew!

But wait, here's the best bit. All this extra equipment comes at no extra cost, because the new 1.6/1.8LX models

are the same maximum retail price as were the L's before February 1st.

Back to the technical side, the LX has a 1.6, 1.8, new 2.0 petrol or new 1.8 litre Turbo Diesel engine. The new 2.0 litre petrol version is, as you'd expect, the most powerful. And will propel you from rest to 60mph in just 11.1 seconds*.

The new Sierra GLX.

Now performance and luxury are brought together.

Moving on and up-market, here's another shining example of Ford's diversity. The new Sierra GLX comes with a choice of four engines. The familiar 1.8 litre, a new 2.0 litre DOHC (Double Overhead Camshaft engine) and, for the performance aficionados among you, a fuel injected version of the same petrol engine. Finally, there's the new 1.8 litre Turbo Diesel engine.

Whichever model you choose will cruise comfortably, and more importantly, safely, at high speed on those long hops down the motorway.

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separate
features
demand
The Sierra GLX
At home on the road
A sporty
Stewart
as the Ford
Grand Prix
a more
There
steering
the rough
black radi
look good
The Sierra GLX
Sapphire now avail
A slightly more
an outstanding
You wanted
option on the
There are other
Quickclear wind
off ice with
will also drop
Other examples
motoring include
lumbar adjustment
front seats.
The XR Sierras
There's now a
XR4x4 you all know
In addition, there
XR4x4 for the more

Sierra GLX Estate.

Sierra XR4x4.

Sapphire Ghia.



All the new DOHC engines get a new gearbox so sophisticated they have syncromesh on reverse. Other features include front fog lamps, headlamp wash-wipe, and electronically heated door mirrors, clearly a good idea.

The Sierra GLS.

At home on the racetrack or the high road.

A sporty car for the driver who still wants to be Jackie Stewart. This car uses the same engine management system as the Ford-Benetton car that won last October's Japanese Grand Prix. Its peppy engine will thrust you from 0-60 in a mere 9.1 seconds*.

There are disc brakes on all four wheels, power assisted steering, and a sports suspension designed to keep you on the roughest of country roads. Ultra-low profile tyres and a black tailgate spoiler on the hatchback ensure you'll also look good around town.

The Sierra Ghia.

Sapphire now available with 4-wheel drive.

A slightly more discreet looking vehicle, the Ghia offers an outstanding combination of luxury and 'driveability'.

You wanted 4-wheel drive? You've now got it as an option on the DOHC 2 litre-injected Sierra Ghia Sapphire.

There are other refinements, notably the Ford-pioneered 'Quickclear' windscreen. Gone are days of hurriedly scraping off ice with credit cards. The electric heater in your window will also stop freezing fog frosting over it.

Other examples of our dedication to stress-free motoring include a top-of-the-range stereo and a pneumatic lumbar adjustment (that's additional back support) on the front seats.

The XR Sierras. Two important new additions.

There's now a family of 3 XRs. The superb 2.9 litre XR4x4 you all know and love. That gets new alloy wheels.

In addition there's also a new DOHC 2 litre-injected XR4x4 for the more tax conscious.

* Ford computed figures.

For those who want the performance and looks of the 2.0 litre XR4x4, but don't require 4-wheel drive, we've introduced the new XR4i.

The new Sierra RS Cosworth.

Now with integral 4-wheel drive.

Well, really, you even demanded more from our ultimate roadcar, the RS Cosworth.

Your tenacity has been rewarded. On the new one you'll find permanently engaged 4-wheel drive and a turbocharged engine, boosted to a staggering 220 ps. The suspension has been modified accordingly, driveshaft redesigned and yes, the brakes have been up-rated to boot.

The new Turbo Diesel Sierras. Our other Turbos.

The RS Cosworth used to be our only turbocharged Sierra. Today there's a new generation of Turbo Diesels, available in Classic/Laser, LX and GLX form. They have an incredibly efficient 1.8 litre engine, which performs more like the petrol variants.

The Sierra Classic and Laser.

Cut the cost of moving up to a larger car.

Say you want to change your car, perhaps because you've got a growing family or simply want more room, then look no further than the Sierra Classic or Laser.

They offer an easier jump into the big car bracket. Each model now comes with an electronic radio-cassette, tinted glass and 14" wheels with 185/65 tyres, plus a whole range of other new features, all as standard. There's even an option of ABS brakes. You'll find both cars an absolute pleasure to drive.

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There is only one Sierra.



February 21 1990

PARLIAMENT

Minister criticizes 'humbug' on S Africa sanctions

The Opposition's attitude to sanctions against South Africa had more to do with internal Labour Party politics than with producing any particular outcome in South Africa, Mr William Waldegrave, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, said in the Commons.

Questioned about the European Community Council of Ministers meeting in Dublin yesterday, he criticized those who passed declaratory motions but did nothing else. There was a great deal of humbug about sanctions, he said.

Mr George Robertson, an Opposition spokesman on foreign and Commonwealth affairs, said that the meeting represented a further miserable humiliation for Britain, "isolated and decided as the last friend of apartheid".

When economic pressures were just beginning to produce some movement to return in South Africa, what conceivable reason was there for Britain, alone among all her allies and partners, relaxing the pressures?

Did the Prime Minister not recognize the perversity of her position?

She was reneging on her own commitment, freely entered into, to keep sanctions in place at least until the state of emergency was lifted, until all political prisoners were set free and, as the Commonwealth

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

communiqué said: "Change was inevitably secured".

Would he explain how, when the Prime Minister was telling the House yesterday that Britain's investment sanctions were going to be lifted, come what may, the Foreign Secretary (Mr Douglas Hurd) said at the same time in Dublin offering to delay the decision.

"Who speaks for Britain? Or was it a case of the messenger not getting the message?"

Yesterday the Prime Minister sought to bolster her feeble case on investment sanctions by quoting BMW (South Africa). Would he confirm that this investment did not come from Germany?

Mr Waldegrave said that, on the last point, the Prime Minister made clear yesterday that those were internal profits being reinvested.

They made the point that it was rather childish to talk about an investment ban when there were some companies hugely expanding their operations in South Africa.

He was not sure that the Opposition yet understood that the measures taken by the Community on September 15 1986 were quite explicit.

They reaffirmed the urgent need for national dialogue across the line of colour, politics and religion. They urged that, since the South African Government was then taking no steps in that direction, certain measures

should be undertaken until that dialogue was launched.

The dialogue was launched, as all sides had made perfectly clear, and was going to begin soon. The reason for these sanctions — not all sanctions — had therefore fallen. They had been, in Mr Robertson's terms, successful.

He had made a silly point about alleged differences between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. There were no differences.

Mr David Howell (Guildford, C), chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, said that South Africa had entered a period of transition in which more, not less, investment was needed to help the black communities to develop. Why did Labour MPs seem determined to do down these efforts for reform?

Mr Waldegrave said that this was nothing to do with producing any particular outcome in South Africa but more with the internal politics of the Labour Party. Labour was making declaratory, emotional statements, not sensible policies. Investment was the best way to dismote apartheid.

Mr Bown Wells (Hertford and Stortford, C) suggested that Mr Nelson Mandela should be asked to visit Britain so that the Government could be certain that its policy was co-ordinated with his.

Mr Waldegrave said that Mr Mandela was considering an invitation to visit Britain. It was no news to Mr Mandela that the British Government disagreed with him on this point.

Mr David Widdow (Walsall North, Lab) said that Mr Edward Heath was right to say that Britain was once again isolated over sanctions.

Mr Waldegrave said that other countries had taken similar national positions. During the Falklands War, the Irish Republic had chosen to end sanctions against Argentina unilaterally.

Later, Mr Waldegrave said that, although the Government had had no legal capacity to stop companies investing in South Africa, it had issued guidance that they should not do so. It now seemed suitable to revise that guidance and after the



Mr William Waldegrave (left) and Mr George Robertson, who clashed in the Commons on the question of sanctions.



Mr William Waldegrave (left) and Mr George Robertson, who clashed in the Commons on the question of sanctions.

Foreign Secretary (Mr Douglas Hurd) had reported the discussion to the Cabinet that was likely to be done.

Dr David Owen, leader of the SDP, said that the decision taken by the Council of Ministers in October 1986 had been binding on the Government. It was voluntary in that companies could not be bound by the decision, but the Government was bound and could not break it unilaterally. The Government was acting unlawfully.

Mr John Carlisle (Luton North, C) said that since 1986 France had doubled its imports from South Africa and increased its exports by 20 per cent. Germany had doubled its imports and its exports.

"If we are to defeat apartheid, it is by economic growth, not economic sanctions."

Mr Waldegrave said that all South Africa's principal trading partners had increased their trade with South Africa in recent years. As the Times leader had said today, there was a great deal of humbug about this subject.

Mr Teddy Taylor (Southend East, C) said that European foreign ministers should be told that it was "pure hypocrisy" for them to refuse to end sanctions when sanctions were being widely ignored in at least five member states.

Mr Waldegrave should tell M

Jacques Delors, the EC president, to initiate a special inquiry to discover exactly why West Germany had emerged as South Africa's largest trading partner while the German Foreign Minister was appealing to Britain to boycott trade with South Africa.

That was a typical example of ministers agreeing to a policy which they were blatantly ignoring to their own selfish interest.

Mr Waldegrave said that there was a big difference between those in the EC and elsewhere whose main policy was declaratory, "who pass motions but that is the end of it", and those who were trying to engage in practical actions to help to bring about change in South Africa.

'Tower is the place' for MPs

The Tower of London may be opened earlier for visitors on Sundays during the summer, Mr David Trippier, Minister for the Environment, said.

Mr Conal Gregory (York, C) said that it was a national scandal that the Tower was closed for the whole of Sundays in winter and was open only on Sunday afternoons in summer.

Mr Trippier said that the practicalities and economics of all-day opening on Sunday were under review.

Mr Tony Banks (Newham North West, Lab) suggested that Mrs Thatcher should be "banged up" in the Tower.

Mr Trippier thought that Mr Banks, Mr Frank Haynes (Ashfield, Lab) and Mr Dennis Skinner (Bolsover, Lab) should be locked in the Tower. When they spoke they would still be able to be heard in the Commons (laughter).

Advice for homeless

An advice service to help to prevent and relieve homelessness was announced at a question time by Mr Michael Spicer, Minister for Housing and Planning. It would cost about £1 million and would advise on the dangers of leaving home as well as on the help available to those who did become homeless.

As a matter of urgency they were considering what further comprehensive action was needed, especially for those sleeping rough on the streets.

Social fund move refused

Mr Michael Mauder, chief Opposition spokesman on social security, unsuccessfully sought an emergency debate on the High Court ruling today on the operation of the social fund.

He said that the ruling meant that thousands of the poorest people in the country had been illegally denied help from the fund because of the Government's inflexible approach.

French power

Imports of electricity from France last year accounted for 4 per cent of total electricity available from the United Kingdom public supply system, Mr Tony Baskley, Under Secretary of State for Energy, said in a written Commons reply.

Electricity

The Opposition motion criticizing the effects of the privatization of the electricity industry was rejected on Tuesday by 289 votes to 207 — Government majority, 82.

Train checks

Passport checks for Channel tunnel passengers will normally take place on trains, Mr David Widdow, Home Secretary, said in a written reply.

New bishop

The Bishop of Exeter, the Right Rev Geoffrey Hewlett Thompson, was introduced in the House of Lords.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Home Office; Prime Minister. Debate on East-West relations. Lords (3): Courts and Legal Services Bill, report, second day.

Dispute on address

Labour MPs reacted furiously when Mr Christopher Chope, Under Secretary of State for the Environment, revealed that he knew the poll tax registration address in Wandsworth of Mr David Nellist (Coventry South East, Lab).

During a plethora of points of order the Speaker came close to expelling Mr Chope when he refused to sit down.

Mr Nellist asked how Mr Chope, a former leader of Wandsworth council, had obtained the information. Had civil servants given it to him, had it come from his contacts at the council?

Mr Christopher Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment, said that access to extracts from the register was permitted. If Mr Nellist had indicated that he did not wish information to be disclosed, his argument was with the registration office.

Councils 'asking for £3bn more'

If all the figures being talked about by local authorities turned out to be true, it would mean a £3 billion increase in the amount above what the Government regarded as reasonable, Mr Christopher Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment, said during Commons question time.

He refused to speculate, however, on the extent of capping that the Government might see.

He told Mr Robert Boyes (Houghton and Washington, Lab) that "if authorities insist on budgeting excessively they will be capped; if they budget sensibly they have nothing to fear."

Mr Boyes said that Mr Patten should take into account the unanimous decision by the policy committee of Berkshire County Council to condemn the Government for the fairytale figures on its estimate of the cost of running and maintaining existing services.

Mr Patten had got the figures

wrong for every local authority in Britain and was it not time he recalculated the figures and got them right?

Mr Patten said that the sort of spending increases which some councils were talking about would, on average, mean a 35 per cent increase in domestic rates if that system were still in place next year.

There is no conceivable argument, even if you believed everything every local authority said, no conceivable argument for increases of that size.

"As for the Royal County of Berkshire, I am wholly satisfied with the argument we have put in the past and I hope that charge-payers will see that the county council set a sensible budget and not ask for an increase in income in the high tens or twenties."

Mr Robin Squire (Hornchurch, C) asked about the Opposition's alternative to the community charge. Mr Bryan

ENVIRONMENT

Gould, Labour's chief spokesman, was engaged in the dance of the seven veils and the first veil had fallen. When the last fell, would it be a mutually rewarding experience?

Mr Patten said that Mr Gould would like to explain the many alleged benefits of the roof tax, but the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Neil Kinnock) stopped him.

Mr Gerard Neale (Cornwall North, C) said that there was a growing hope and expectation in Cornwall that Mr Patten would see fit to do the outrageous increases being proposed by Cornwall County Council.

Mr Patten said that he had responsibilities towards charge-payers faced with outrageous bills. No final decision could be made until all local authority budgets had been completed.

Mr Gould said that there was

overwhelming evidence that the Government's projections were fiction. It would be better to make a clean breast of it and withdraw the figures rather than make vague threats about capping.

Would the Government at least publish the criteria so that local authorities, which could have no confidence in the figures used so far, would have some guidelines as to how they were expected to make their judgements?

Mr Patten said that the Government would be publishing the criteria on charge-capping, if it had to, long before the Opposition published any statistics on the roof tax.

If all the figures for community charge being talked about were true, that would imply a £3 billion increase in spending. "Is it the Opposition's point of view that we should provide £3 billion additional grant to local authorities in the coming year?"

Rape in marriage Bill introduced

Mr Harry Cohen (Leyton, Lab) was given leave under the 10 minute rule to introduce the Rape in Marriage (Offence) Bill. He said that such rape was an offence in Scotland but not in England.

The law was outrageous and did not reflect the reality of marriage nor society's attitude to rape. A wife was not a husband's chattel and just because a woman had said "I do" at one time should not deny her legal protection to say "I do not wish to" at a later time.

A husband who was about to be divorced could rape his wife without any legal penalty.

The Government was stalling by referring the subject to the Law Commission. That would mean a delay of two or three years. The fact that a crime was difficult to prove was no reason

for saying that it was not a crime at all. There was a simple moral decision to be made.

Mr Anthony Marlow (Northampton North, C) opposed the Bill, but did not press it to a division.

He said that remedies to protect women already existed. Assault by husband against wife was a crime and could be dealt with by the courts.

It was an absurd measure, motivated by a combination of distress caused to some unfortunate women and what Private Eye would call "wimmin' — the ghastly feminist lobby which seemed to think all men were evil: that men were made of slugs and snails and puppy dogs' tails and women of sugar and spice and all things nice.

The Bill was formally read a first time.

'Cab rank' defeat for Government

The following report appeared in later editions yesterday.

The Government suffered a setback in the Lords when peers carried an amendment to the Courts and Legal Services Bill requiring solicitors appearing as advocates to comply to the "cab rank" rule — to accept clients without regard to reward or likelihood of winning.

Lord Alexander of Wealdon (C), a barrister, moving the amendment on the report stage of the Bill, said that it would ensure that everyone had proper access to the service of advocates.

Those given extended rights of audience under the Bill should accept the obligation to argue cases without regard to the popularity or unpopularity of cases and should not decline a case "because payment is to be

made by the legal aid fund rather than out of the more ample private purse".

The amendment was intended as a bulwark for the citizen.

Lord Minkhouse, an Opposition spokesman on legal affairs and a solicitor, said that if one asked for a privilege already granted to others, one must accept the burdens that those others had borne and one should do so proudly.

The amendment was carried by 99 votes to 92 — majority 7 — on the basis of the popularity or unpopularity of cases and should not decline a case "because payment is to be

Luce will not intervene to help RSC

The following report appeared in later editions yesterday.

The Government will not intervene directly to help the Royal Shakespeare Company out of its financial difficulties, Mr Richard Luce, Minister for the Arts, made clear in the Commons. It was for the Arts Council to decide how to distribute the funds at its disposal.

"I am quite confident that the RSC will continue with the highest level of excellence and I am very proud of its achievements."

Opening a debate on the RSC, Mr Mark Fisher, Opposition spokesman on the arts, moved a motion deploring government treatment of the company which was forcing it to close its stages at the Barbican in London from November. The motion called for more government funding.

that the RSC was a successful company, receiving international acclaim. It was extremely popular. Last year, 1.5 million people paid to see the RSC, yet it was in deficit by £3 million.

Mr Luce said that arts companies should go into the market place and look for sponsorship. The RSC had raised £1 million in sponsorship and earned another £1 million a year from commercial exploitation of productions.

The recent increase of 11 per cent in Arts Council grant had been too little too late. For 10 years the Government had neglected the arts. That could not be put right by a settlement only 3.5 per cent more than inflation.

Mr Luce said that Labour criticism fell between a Comedy of Errors and Much Ado About Nothing and included an enormous amount of Alice in Wonderland. Mr Fisher had become a merchant of doom and despondency, far away from the reality of what was happening in the arts.

The Government is committed to maintaining taxpayer support for the arts."

The Arts Council had had a cash

increase in its resources of 22 per cent over three years. Museums were to have a 27 per cent increase over three years. The Government was spending about £500 million a year. More money was being raised from the private sector and from sponsorship.

Mr Robert Maclean, for the Liberal Democrats, said that there was no other way out for the RSC than a big increase in government funding. Barbecue seat prices were the highest in London and since 1985 had increased by 47.5 per cent. There was no scope for further price increases without infringing the charitable objectives of the RSC charter.

Mr Patrick Cornack (Mid Staffordshire, C) said that if the lights of the Barbican were allowed to go out the arts would be diminished throughout the nation. The great national theatres deserved special funding. It was unfair for that responsibility to rest with the Arts Council which could not always adequately discharge it. The Government should consider special funding for the great national institutions.

The RSC had taken a hard commercial decision. Given the figures, it had no alternative, but he hoped that something would now happen to enable it to stay open during the year.

Mr Brian Sedgemore (Hackney South and Shoreditch, Lab) said that the Prime Minister was a legendary philistine who did not understand the way in which Shakespeare moved the human spirit. He called upon Sir Peter Palumbo, chairman of the Arts Council, to resign for failing to find the additional money to keep the Royal Shakespeare Company open and to bring home to the Government and the public the desperate plight of the theatre.

Mr Tony Banks, an Opposition spokesman on the arts, said that the arts were no more important than the homeless, unemployment and transport chaos, but were as important. An age was far more likely to be judged on the standards and excellence of its architecture, sculpture, and literature, than on its obsolete weapons of death and destruction.

The motion was rejected by 272 votes to 201 — Government majority, 71.

How Labour changed its spots

By Robin Oakley, Political Editor

Emerging from the first meeting of Labour's new policy committee after the last general election, Neil Kinnock said: "I am not in the trimming business."

When Bryan Gould, the Labour star of the campaign, refused to let Kinnock resign after a defeat by saying: "We ought to be looking at where policies ought to come from, what the demand is, what interests we ought to be serving", an outraged Roy Hattersley said:

"The idea that six weeks after an election defeat, somebody can come along and say: 'These are all the things we are changing this policy, we have a new defence policy, we abandon nationalisation, we give up our vision of equality. What we do, we send out a lot of marketing men into the country, just as the Democrats did in America 20 years ago, and say 'what are the policies people want and when we find out what they'll vote for, we'll write it into our manifesto' — that's not the sort of politics I want to be involved in."

Mr Kinnock now presides over a party reformed to make it safe for Social Democrats to return to, and Mr Hattersley, the fellow veteran of the "dream ticket", is still there beside him.

A new book charts the process by which Mr Kinnock in the meantime has attempted to re-balance Labour's own internal majority, reduced the overwhelming influence of the trade unions and dropped the main policies

which had made Labour successful in 1983 and 1987 — punitive measures of tax, extension of nationalisation, restoration of trade union rights cut by the Tories and an avowedly unilateralist defence stance.

Patrick Winterson and Colin Hughes have produced a skilful and pacy survey of the policy review process, laced with plenty of anecdotes such as Robin Cook's initial refusal to manage Roy Hattersley's campaign for the deputy leadership as well as Kinnock's for the top job.

In their analysis of the 1987 campaign we learn, for example, that Labour spent £15,000 on the "Labour's Choice" campaign, that Mr Kinnock was photographed only against suitable backdrops, none of the old crumbling industrial Britain.

And we are told of the Labour leader's ally promise that Labour would launch a million off the unemployment totals within two years when no policy to do so had been worked out at all. Bryan Gould was given three weeks to produce one costing less than £6 billion.

Several key blocks in Neil Kinnock's rebuilding of his party's policies are identified. It was a conscious decision, for example, to marginalise the hard left by going after Militant in its Liverpool lair.



Mr Kinnock: I am not in the trimming business.

establishing new joint policy teams embracing both groups.

But the most intriguing feature of the study is the light cast on the shadows behind the shadows — the Shadow Communications Agency, which became the prime mover in a policy review process not long after Peter Mandelson, Kinnock's director of campaigns and communications, wrote a memorandum to his boss urging the switch from a policy-committee-based process to a communications-based exercise in reforming the party's attitudes.

The authors label as "Gitz-

most", the process by which a group of volunteers from advertising and marketing offered their services to Labour, in most cases without charge, and how their research and presentations helped to shape the policy review and of the "Labour listers" process.

The key figure among them was the co-ordinator of the Shadow Communications Agency, Philip Gould who taught Labour to target the readers of the tabloid newspapers it had previously dismissed and to avoid the impression that it represented only subsidies.

What they had to do amounted almost to a con-trick on the initially reluctant politicians involved in policy-making: they had to demonstrate by what looked like totally independent research that Labour had to shed the "Loony Left" image, its dependence on the trade unions and its perceived weakness on defence.

There can be little doubt that they succeeded in that first phase: how far the policy review process itself has been a success yet to be determined — when the election campaign begins to unravel the wool.

Labour has discovered thanks to its communications experts what it no longer can afford to believe in the question now is what does it really believe in? *Labour Rebuilt: The New Model Party* by Colin Hughes and Patrick Winterson (Fourth Estate; £6.95).

MPs approve divorcees move

The following report is a fuller version of that which appeared in later editions yesterday.

The Commons voted late on Tuesday to reverse its controversial decision of last year on Church of England ordinations. It asked by 225 a Motion to permit in certain circumstances the ordination of people who had been divorced and remarried or who have married a divorcee.

The Measure had been rejected by only 6 votes (51-45) in the early hours of the morning last July. The House of Lords approved it, and the Church of England Synod decided to resubmit it, unchanged, to the Commons.

The Measure empowers the archbishops to permit the ordination of someone who has remarried after divorce and whose former spouse is still alive.

Mr Michael Allison, Second Church Estates Commissioner, moving the Clergy (Ordination) Measure, said that the debate was an unusual re-run. Because last year's debate had taken place in the early hours, many suggested that it had not done justice to the importance attached to it by the General Synod.

The issue related to the marital status of men and women seeking ordination. At present, those who were divorced and remarried and with their previous partner still living were debarred from ordination.

that she was grateful for the opportunity to express the view of many Anglicans mystified by what the church was seeking to condone. Their voice was not sufficiently reflected in synod. They looked to the church to provide them with a lead in matters of moral matters and had been sadly disappointed.

It might not be the right time for Parliament to take on the established church and give it a boost up the backside, but she believed it to be the right moment to make a stand against liberal trends on matters of morality.

To allow the ordination of men who had been divorced and then remarried made a mockery of the church's teaching.

Mr Tony Bean (Chesham, Lab) said that the matter threw into sharp focus the matter of church-state relations.

One of the motives of those who opposed the Measure, he believed, was that church pronouncements on peace, poverty and social justice had greatly angered some Conservative MPs. He would not take lectures from those who had enacted legislation that had caused so much social injustice.

If the Measure were accepted, the House was really accepting the right of the church to be free. If it rejected the Measure, the church would demand its freedom.

Mr John Gummer (Suffolk Coastal, C), a member of the General Synod, said that the proposal was for a special case for the very people of whom a higher standard was asked than others. What signal did that send to the rest of the community?

Mr Andrew Rowe (Mid Kent, C) said that to reject the Measure was to say that the House doubted the redemptive power of the Holy Spirit, distrusted the judgement of the archbishops and that MPs were happy to ride rough-shod over the vocation of a faithful of Christians to be gratified their prejudices or feed their human fears.

Mr Jo Richardson (Barking, Lab) said

that it was not a matter on which Parliament ought to make a decision. It should be left to the synod.

Mr Frank Field (Birkenhead, Lab) opposed the Measure and said that they had to decide on the balance of the argument, not on the high theology used by some MPs who also opposed it.

They were being asked by the church to create a privileged group who could be divorced and remarry in the lifetime of a spouse, and be ordained, while most people could not.

Sir Patrick Mayhew (Tunbridge Wells, C) said that they should allow the law of the church to take account of the circumstances in which an undoubted infringement of the church's code had taken place.

"I stand by the doctrine that, for a Christian, remarriage when your divorced former wife was alive was adulterous and therefore a sin."

However, to insist that someone who wished to be ordained should always be barred because, perhaps long ago, he had divorced and remarried was a disproportionate sanction and inherently wrong.

Mr Mervyn Rees (Leamington Spa, Lab) said that, like Mr Field, he would be one more little movement along the road to disestablishment. Both the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland were better for having been freed from political control.

Mr Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow, C) said that the Church of England had gone wrong and it no longer provided the guidance that ordinary people expected. He had lost trust in the church and did not believe its motives were correct. The Measure should be rejected.

Mr Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey, Lib Dem) said that to defeat the Measure would be to deny the sacrament of forgiveness for those who were to be ordained, a sacrament which the church offered to its lay members.

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SPECTRUM

Model of a modern

THE TIMES
PROFILE

DANIEL ORTEGA

Drive for a day or two around the dusty roads of Managua, the lakeside capital of Nicaragua, and the chances are you will be overtaken by a speeding American Jeep, not of the army variety but the shiny black and chrome type beloved of wealthy young Americans.

In the back sit big men clenching guns, and at the wheel hunches a mild-looking, mouse-chinned man, probably clad in an Italian leather jacket and jeans. The driver is Daniel Ortega, guerrilla leader, president and the man long viewed by Ronald Reagan as an incarnation of the Leninist devil.

Fidel Castro would not be seen dead in a product from the country he reviles in only slightly stronger terms than does Ortega. But Daniel, as he is universally called, finds nothing odd in his attachment to his designer Jeeps, bought in spite of the United States embargo.

The vehicle, and Ortega's affinity with things American, are part of the contradictions that define the 44-year-old Nicaraguan president, and which help explain why he may win the election next Sunday and become a member of that very rare breed, revolutionary leftists with a more or less democratic conscience.

A decade since Ortega and his Sandinista comrades stormed down from the hills and joined a middle-class uprising to overthrow the hated Anastasio Somoza, Daniel still comes across as one of the world's more unlikely leaders. No typical Latin strongman, he has none of the magnetism of a Castro, the eloquence of Tomas Borge, the interior minister and his headline Sandinista rival. He lacks the macho panache of Bayardo Arce, another of the nine *comandantes* in the ruling directorate, and the tactical insight of his younger brother Humberto, the army chief.

In the early days, foreigners who met Ortega wondered how this awkward young man could have achieved his status as Reagan's bogeyman, the "dictator in designer glasses", as the old president used to call him. "You couldn't have a decent exchange with him, he came at you with this revolutionary jargon like a stream of little recorded messages," one interlocutor remembers.

The appearance was always deceptive. It is true that the young

comandantes initially picked Ortega as a compromise among feuding rivals. But his inner steel, forged by battle and seven years of jail and torture, was recognized by his comrades, particularly those who tried and failed to outmanoeuvre him in the 1980s.

Since 1984, when Ortega won a presidential election, boycotted by the opposition on US advice, he has grown in authority and sophistication, deploying allies in key positions and becoming the country's unchallenged leader.

Always the pragmatist, he used his authority to push his fellow *comandantes* towards compromise in 1987. This paved the way to the regional peace accords and negotiation with the Contra rebels as well as a shift from harsh ideology. Enough of the repressive state machinery was lifted to permit open political campaigning. The result is an election arguably no more biased than those of Mexico, El Salvador and other Latin states which Washington certifies as democratic.

In recent months, Ortega has undergone a metamorphosis. He has emerged as a more polished performer, displaying skills that could have come straight from an American campaign book. Some probably did, since the Sandinistas employ a New York firm of consultants. Gaze, for example, are the dark uniforms, thick glasses and revolutionary rhetoric. In their place have come a contact-lens, casually dressed, jogging man of the people who greets crowds rather in the manner of a rock star. He kisses babies, poses with beautiful women and signs baseballs which are then hurled into the audience. With Daniel in charge, the slogans proclaim, *todo sera mejor* (everything will be better). Violeta Chamorro, his opponent is no match when it comes to style and campaigning machinery, though it is still conceivable that she could reap the widespread resentment that war and economic misery have bred, and defeat Ortega.

The idea of the Ortega slogan is that the sun will rise for Nicaragua once he receives a popular mandate. The Americans will be forced to drop their economic offensive and call off the Contras, some 3,000 of whom are still skirmishing inside the country. They are not so sure of that outcome in Washington, where Ortega is seen as a ruthless



tactician who may swiftly move against civil liberties again, once he is safely in power.

Ortega bides his time as a Marxist-Leninist puppet of the Kremlin, whatever that might mean. If he has a creed, it is an eclectic mix of Latin nationalism, Catholic mysticism and that Marxism of the radical Sixties generation from which he sprang. "I admire Marx, I respect Marx, as I also admire and respect Lenin," he said recently. "But I also admire Lincoln, Washington, Bolivar and Christ as well." He might also have added Bob Dylan and Che Guevara.

The key to Ortega is his loathing for the evil he believes the US

inflicted on his country through a century of manipulation and frequent military occupation. "I didn't have any Marxist-Leninist training or any ideas of that sort, but I thought that anything that came from the US was bad. That was simply because I could see that the US was supporting Anastasio Somoza."

From his birth in the northern village of La Libertad in 1945,

Ortega and his two brothers were bathed in the bitterness of the lower middle-classes towards the Somoza family and their American protectors. His father had been a supporter of August Cesar Sandino, the nationalist rebel

murdered in 1934 by the elder Somoza. After he lost his job at an American gold mine, the father took his family to a poor district of Managua where the brothers grew up playing baseball and eating hot dogs.

Former school-mates say the

brothers' revolutionary enthu-

siasm blossomed when their

father's poverty forced them to

leave their well-to-do Catholic

school, and they were dropped by

their Americanized friends.

In his teens, Ortega organized a

loose anti-Somoza gang which

protested and indulged in terrorist

attacks. By the mid-Sixties he had

joined the revolutionary Sand-

inista National Liberation Front

and was sent to Cuba at the age of

20 for training. After robbing

banks and taking part in the

murder of a notorious Somoza

torturer, he was caught and jailed.

In prison, frequently tortured, he developed the resolve and self-discipline that later took him to the top. He read - *Las Miserables* was his favourite - and began writing poetry and corresponded with Rosario Murillo, a budding young poet and Sandinista supporter who had been educated in England and Switzerland. Rosario, a powerful influence, later became his common-law wife and bore him five children. In recent months, however, Nicaragua's first lady has gone her own way as Daniel has campaigned alone, or appearing with other women.

His freedom came in 1974, when a Sandinista squad stormed a high-society Christmas party and demanded the release of political prisoners in exchange for their prominent hostages. In late 1975, Daniel returned from Cuba and Costa Rica to help reconcile feuding Sandinista factions.

Following Humberto's

lead, he shaped the co-

alition of guerrillas, ur-

ban youth and

businessmen that even-

ually brought down Somoza

in 1979, after President Jimmy

Carter pulled out American support.

A third Ortega brother, Camillo,

was killed in the fighting.

After a euphoric period in which

the Sandinistas were hailed by

leftists the world over as the

embodiment of revolutionary

glamour, they fell out with the

"bourgeois" partners in their rul-

ing junta and, with Soviet-bloc

support, began installing the appar-

atus of the armed party-state. But

while the Ortegas divided power

between them, just as Fidel and

Raul Castro had done, their

directorates stopped well short of

full totalitarian control. Even as he

mobilized his country to fight the

contras, a force created by

Reagan to "make the Sandinistas

cry uncle", Ortega professed a

belief in pluralism and a mixed

economy and, unlike hardline

Cuba, his regime retained its

standing as a fashionable cause for

western socialists. It is a sign of the

changing times that the pragmatic

Ortega has removed any reference

to socialism from his party's

election manifesto.

Now, after a war that has cost

some 35,000 lives and with the

economy in collapse, a more

mellow and confident Ortega ap-

pears intent on the kind of

compromises that will help restore

international confidence and end

the "Yankee blockade".

If he is lucky, he will not this

time have to face the test of his

proclaimed democratic beliefs

that would come with a defeat by

Chamorro. Few foreign observers

believe he would really give up the

power he has consolidated over

two decades of war and intrigue.

A revolution made in Japan

Only one art form survives from the time of the Russian Revolution. It is the blank white crockery commandeered from the imperial porcelain factory and decorated either with the abstract vocabulary of the avant-garde Suprematist movement, or with pictures of heroic workers and slogans such as "May the Bourgeoisie Disappear, Capitalism Exist!"

Today, with bourgeois attitudes in the ascendant on both sides of the Iron Curtain, such plates have become the ultimate communist collectable. The record for a single example rose to £44,000 last October.

The problem is that the capitalist urge has brought with it a darker side. It has turned Russians into grand-scale fakers, bringing them into line with their Western counterparts, and their skills will be demonstrated at "Fake: The art of deception", a major British Museum exhibition from March 9.

The Russian faking industry has been hampered by a lack of information on exactly what the backs of the plates should look like. As museums tend to display only the fronts, bloomers such as incorrect signatures and dates can be detected, but only by a handful of experts. Buyers who have been conned include many Western dealers and museums.

So far, distribution has been restricted. A handful of Berlin dealers commission a "runner" to go to the Soviet Union, stock up, then fly to East Berlin, and

artfile

A weekly look at the art world

Sarah Jane Checkland

Likewise, any Suprematist plates dated 1919 to 1921 are fake, as the first real ones were made in 1922.

Who are the culprits? According to Lobanov-Rostovsky "there have been busy brushes at work in Moscow, Leningrad, Berlin and elsewhere", and they have been inspired by several events. One was the unwise announcement by the state museum for ceramics at Kashkovo, on the outskirts of Moscow, that it intended to fill in the gaps in its "agit-prop"

(Western museums keep their purchasing policies secret, to avoid affecting the market). The purchasing budget was large, and became known in art circles.

In 1985, a major travelling exhibition of Soviet textiles further publicized the stories of

hammer and sickle alongside.

Last summer, during a trip to Sweden, Lobanov-Rostovsky was shown a "magnificently painted pot" dated 1919.

"But there was no USSR in 1919," she says. "Suspects include the families of the original porcelain artists who still have stocks of blank plates under their beds. Due to the freezing conditions at the factory, their grandfathers had to work in relative comfort. These people were also commissioned by the ceramics state museum to produce copies of missing examples, and the theory is that after the contract was complete, they carried on painting."

As things are going the only way to protect this faked agit-prop market is not by traditional stylistic analysis but by the scrupulous checking of provenance. "The minute you hear it's come from a Berlin dealer, suspect," said an expert. Lobanov-Rostovsky has armed herself with undisputed examples, "as from December 31 1989," and awaits developments with interest. But despite such precautions, fake propaganda plates - which do not show up on the security screens at airports - are here to stay.

Revolutionary Ceramics, Soviet Porcelain 1917-1927, by Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky, will be published by Cassell in May.



Revolutionary plate: from 1921

Eliminator explained

Orthodox Christian churches, especially in Bulgaria and Cyprus.
23 Where to find Susanna, since the Canon won't have her (9) - Apocrypha: the history of Susanna in the Apocrypha, which is outside the Biblical canon, or list of sacred writings officially recognised as genuine.
24 Redundant India's capital (4) - Ipoh: reverse of Hindi: Ipoh the capital of Perak, Malaysia.
25 Said to exploit W Africans (4) - Ewe: a negroid people of W Africa.
26 College has a Herakle Extraordinary with many facets (10) - Polytechnic: Poly (technical) plus suffix Herakle.
27 Join artist less than half a mile away (4) - Fuses: Fuses, Swiss artist, minus 11, Chinese unit of distance, about 3/8 mile.
28 Lacking in guts, perhaps, for the ascent of a splendid mountain in S Africa (7) - Apathetic: medical term for congenital absence of guts; a/s/ap/a reversed.

3 Angel hard to make out in shadowy portrayal (5-7) - Claret: obscure, another (French) word for chamois, the balance of light and shade in a picture, and the painter's skill in the treatment of shadows. Angel Clare, the central character in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.
4 Martin sounds under age, so can be removed (9) - Erasable: sable is fur of the marten.
11 Rebound a huge criminal - once the King's property (3-9) - Dun Laoghaire: known as Terenure 1821-1921; anagram.
17 Arms used in the occupation of Chester (8) - Heraldry: Chester Herald, an officer of the College of Arms.
19 What happened when the early cinema forgot to plot (7) - Apocope: the removal of the final letter or syllable(s) of a word, as in cinema, which started life as cinematograph.
21 Tell his opponent he raised his hat in vain (7) - Gessler: Hermann G. steward of the Duke of Austria, put his hat on a pole in Alost to which the Swiss had to do reverence. When William Tell refused, Gessler made him shoot the apple off his son's head. (Asked what his second arrow was for, Tell replied: "to shoot you with, had I killed my son".)
22 It shows how fast the junkie runs out at a party (6) - Speedo: Sportswear. Competitors will be informed their results in the Eliminator within five weeks.

John Grant

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TIMES DIARY

ALAN HAMILTON

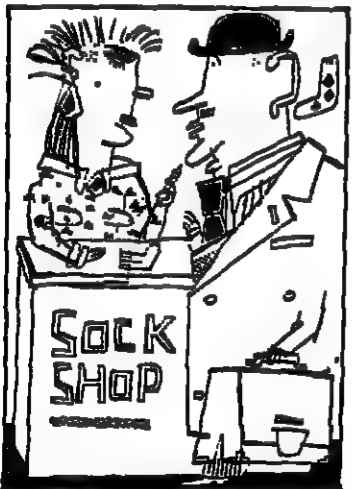
The emotional reappearance of cellist Mstislav Rostropovich in Leningrad the other day almost didn't happen, I learn. He and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, of which he is the conductor, arrived on Friday but the musicians, appalled at the thought of drinking the brown tap water and the only marginally less disgusting local bottled water after two days of it in Moscow, refused to appear at the Philharmonic Hall unless they were provided with French mineral water. Chase Manhattan, the tour sponsor, had to fly 500 litres of the stuff from Paris to Helsinki and cart it thence by road to Leningrad, where it arrived a day late and only in the nick of time to save the concert. And no, it wasn't Perrier; it was the rival and, so far, untainted Evian.

While in Leningrad, this column's representative asked Mrs Tatiana Zakharova, deputy mayor in charge of cultural affairs, about the nine-billion rouble refurbishment programme to return the city to its full Tsarist glory for the 300th anniversary of the founding of St Petersburg in 1703. When would the place be called by the time of the 2003 junketing? "Leningrad," said Mrs Zakharova without hesitation. She's Party, you understand. However on March 4 she is being opposed for the first time by a non-Party candidate in the city elections. So we'll see, won't we?

Gritted teeth, I suspect, for the Prince of Wales in Washington tonight when he attends the annual awards ceremony of the American Institute of Architects. Top prize will go to Kohn Pedersen Fox, designers of part of the Canary Wharf development which Charles so patently dislikes and of which he asked: "Why does it have to be so tall?" It's all right, Sir; tonight's winners designed the low bits.

Today's saddest story of the New European Order concerns Dr Ronald Scheel, who left his home in East Germany as soon as the Hungarians opened their border to the West last September. Driving his trusty Trabant, the world's worst car but now something of a freedom symbol, he pushed on through Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria, braving all manner of hardships, tolls and snares until he reached the safety of West Germany. Impressed that his Trabant was still functioning, and having inordinate faith in its noisy and noisy two-stroke engine, he had the brilliant notion of driving on and presenting the car to the Beaulieu motor museum in Hampshire. Alas, this epic journey came to a sudden end on Tuesday afternoon, when he was hit by a lorry on an autobahn outside Stuttgart. From a German roadside phone he informed Beaulieu that he was fine, "but the car is sick". The Trabant is currently in a garage, while an anxious Dr Scheel camps in an adjoining hotel. Staff at Beaulieu, who are extremely keen to have what was to be the only example in Britain of a P601 Limousine (was ever a word so misused?), are on tenterhooks for further news, and praying that it was a very small lorry.

BARRY FANTONI



'My shares keep falling down'

Rolls-Royces and Porsches parked outside the Methodist church in Wiltshire, Cheshire, have so embarrassed the clergy that they have resorted to wheel clamps. In future anyone using the church car park without permission, blocking access to funerals and other vital business, will be able to drive away only after paying £25 to be unclamped. Unless, of course, they care to join the church.

Despite the acres of newprint devoted to his alleged chicanery while chairman of Guinness, Deadly Ernest Saunders maintains remarkably cordial relations with the press covering his trial at Southwark Crown Court. Indeed he has taken to awarding a prize for what he considers the best coverage of the day. His first winner was *The Sport* (not a journal in much danger of being mistaken for the *Financial Times*), which wrapped up the day's riveting hearing in two tiny paragraphs at the bottom of page two. The page one headline meanwhile shouted: "Three-In-A-Bed Led To Death."

On the southern side of the River Thames, between the bridges at Blackfriars and Southwark, you will find Zoar Street. I will amend that statement: drive south, over Blackfriars Bridge, turn left and left again, and you discover an enclave of thoroughfares among which the London A-Z street guide and gazetteer promises Zoar Street — the penultimate entry, with only Zoffany Street in Archway, N19, before you reach the end of the index. Sumner Street is the main drag; off it snake Holland and Hopton, Castle and Canvey, also Bear Lane, where I asked a workman for Zoar Street's whereabouts. Spell it, he said. I spelt it. "With a Z?" I said yes. He had not heard of it — never come across a street starting with a Z.

Some time after that, in Great Guildford Street, I inquired of a

Please complete our birth certificate

It may be difficult for Britons to understand the depth of feeling behind Australia's request to hold permanently one of the two vellum copies of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of 1900 — a request which now has the backing of a private member's Bill introduced into the Commons by Labour MP Alf Morris.

Constitutionally speaking, Australia is a young country, yet it is fast developing a sense of history. As we look back to affirm our origins as a nation, we cannot go past this Act, which is the sole repository of the constitutional provisions which determine the shape of Australian government and which our people regard as the embodiment of Australian nationhood.

For Australians, our written constitution is not a dry and dusty piece of paper, but a living document which continues to have a direct and immediate impact on a vast range of our country's affairs. From Britain's point of view, it symbolizes the history, heritage and traditions shared by Australia and Britain.

The values of individual liberty that we uphold, the democratic freedoms that we champion, the social justice that we enjoy, the commitment to peace

and the rule of law have never been so relevant. We Australians are fortunate to have a constitution which, little changed since its enactment in 1900, embodies all these ideals.

The interest in it among ordinary Australians is evident. Since our bicentennial in 1988, when the copy of the Act that we seek was lent for display in Australia, some two million visitors have seen it in the new Parliament House in Canberra. If we are granted permanent possession of this document, it would most likely have pride of place in the museum of political history planned for the old Parliament House building in the national capital.

A unique aspect of our constitution is its thoroughly Australian character. It was endorsed at the time by a majority of Australians and by each of our parliaments and governments, and has been amended only by a unique Australian process involving a popular vote.

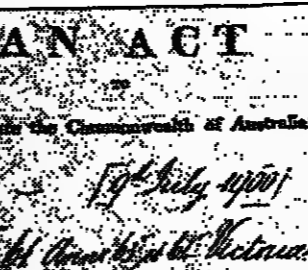
It was appropriate that Alf Morris should introduce his Bill on February 12, for this coincided with the centenary of the Australian federation conference held in Melbourne from February 6 to 14, 1890. This conference, which brought to-

Bob Hawke,
the Prime
Minister of
Australia,
explains why

his countrymen want permanent possession of a document that would round off their nationhood

gether the six Australian colonies, agreed the steps which eventually led to federation. It passed a resolution in favour of their "early union".

For Australia, progress towards independence was evolutionary, not revolutionary. At the time of the passage of our constitution, full independence from Britain was a prospect well in the future. The constitution set us on a path of peaceful and ungrudging disengagement from the protection of our British founders, and led to the irresistible emergence of an indepen-



AN ACT
To give effect to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of 1900.
19 July 1990
The Hon. Bob Hawke
Prime Minister of Australia

dent and self-reliant Australia. In June last year, while visiting Britain, I met the Anzac group of MPs and peers and tried to convey to them the meaning and significance to Australia of the Parliament at Westminster.

It was from there that the 1787 speech from the throne announced the intention of the First Settlement of Australia. The same Parliament also authorized the first expenditures on the infant colony of New South Wales. And it was at Westminster — on July 9, 1900 — that

the Act which gave birth to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia was passed, establishing the basic institutions of parliamentary government and the judiciary in the new Australian nation.

Britain has staked out its future as part of a large and integrated Europe, and we Australians have moved to involve ourselves with the dynamism of Asia and the Pacific. But it would be wrong to conclude that we are therefore drifting apart.

Since our bicentennial celebrations, the relationship between Australia and Britain has been revitalized and modernized. The most remarkable thing about our relationship is not the extent of change but the substance which endures.

No other nation has had so direct and detailed a legislative and constitutional connection with the Parliament at Westminster as Australia. Only in 1986, with the Australia Bill, did Parliament in Canberra vote to terminate any remaining powers for Westminster to make laws affecting us.

Despite considerable changes in the composition of the Australian population since the Second World War, despite the new

richness and diversity in our society created by communities from very different backgrounds — some with different systems of democracy, some where there is no tradition of democracy at all — the Australian commitment to parliamentary democracy remains as strong as ever. The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act symbolizes and gives life to that commitment.

We have recently ascertained that we hold in Australia a duplicate original of the Royal Proclamation, signed by Queen Victoria, which brought the Act into force on January 1, 1901. This is in addition to our duplicate original of the Commission of Royal Assent to the Act, also signed by Queen Victoria. Obtaining the copy of the Act which we now seek would complete the triad of documents which, taken together, represents the birth certificate of our nation.

When the constitution was enacted, Australians became one people. It would be fitting if by 2001 — Australia's centenary of federation, the first major celebration of our constitutional nationhood — the Act had a permanent home in Australia to serve as the focal point for the celebrations.

Bernard Levin takes evasive action at the very mention of a prehistoric fossil

Crawlies that give me the creeps

Mr Stanley Wood, a palaeontologist by trade, has discovered a fossilized scorpion's head, which he claims is 340 million years old. Well, it could be 680 million for all I care. But he added that the head was two feet wide, from which he deduced that the whole thing would have been 10 ft long.

I have to say, with the very greatest emphasis, that I do not wish to know that I am one of those unfortunate people who suffer from a phobia; my particular terror is of all varieties of creepy-crawlies, though the disorder is at its most intense when the eight-legged kind comes scuttling towards me. And when I learn that in the Carboniferous era, scorpions more than three yards long abounded, I tend to get into bed and pull all the bedclothes over my head, though not before pushing the chest of drawers against the door and making sure that the cyanide pill is at hand.

Moreover, this is not the first time Mr Wood, may he be found as a fossil 340 million years hence, has caused me to climb half way up the chimney and stay there. He is greatly given to the practice of finding horrors from bygone ages and describing them in a manner well calculated to turn my sleep to screaming nightmare. He seems to find most of his beasts at East Kirkton, in Scotland, and so far, in addition to the 10 ft stinging thing, he has produced giant millipedes (as any insectophobe

will tell you, the more legs the greater the horror), harvestman spiders (whatever they may be, and I fear the worst) and millions of the scorpions.

Then it gets worse. It seems that the received belief about the Carboniferous period has hitherto been that it was ruled by the giant amphibians, who spent their time snoozing from morning to night in the Carboniferous warmth. But no, says Wood; the giant scorpions would have done them in in no time: "Amphibians", he insists, "couldn't afford to lie about sunning themselves with these carnivores scurrying around." I suppose not; just listen to Wood as he warms to his work:

They would capture their prey and drag it under cover. Then they injected their digestive juices into their prey, and waited until it had become a soup. Then they sucked it up.

Well, it takes all sorts... There really is a man who thinks nothing of finding the traces of 10 ft scorpions, together with millipedes that would stretch from here to right over there, and boasting about his finds — boasting, I may say, to such good purpose that his fellow palaeontologists have taken to calling him "Stan" and agreeing with him that at East Kirkton at least, the scorpions once ruled the earth. There is some argument about whether his friends were aquatic giant scorpions or terrestrial giant scorpions, but I refuse to take sides; the horrible things might have been flying giant

scorpions for all the comfort it would bring me.

Do you remember a film called *Them!*? The things of the title were a family of giant ants, at least as big as Stan's scorpions, and the female of the species, towards the end of the film, was gravid with millions upon millions of itty-bitty ants, all of which, when they were born, were going to grow up as giant ones, which in a few ant generations would have overrun the entire earth. (I suppose the giant scorpions might have been induced to deal with them, but I wouldn't have bet on it.) Just in time, the hero shot the monster, and the ant larvae perished in their mother's womb.

It will not surprise you to learn that I did not go to see that film; all I know of it was from reading the reviews, and that was quite bad enough. (I did look at the pictures outside the cinema where it was showing, but I did not do so twice.) I took comfort, though, from a faraway memory, so far away, indeed, that it came from my schooldays. The giant ants in the film had, of course, the same shape and proportions as real ones. But I remembered, or I thought I did, that if the length and breadth of a solid object are multiplied by x , its mass is thereby multiplied by x^3 squared. (Or is it cubed?) The giant ants, therefore, could not have existed. Score one for peace of mind.

That, though, was fiction; according to Stan, the scorpion man, his 10 ft stingers were



after Gogol's
The Sleep
of Reason
produces
monsters
P. B. Shreeve

about the size of a fully-grown octopus, and I flew down the stairs gibbering, in the hope of finding someone still about — other than Stan, of course — to take an interest in my plight. Fortunately, my hostess had not gone to bed, and the brave girl picked it up with a tissue and sent it on its way. (The real phobic, like me, screams as loudly at seeing some normal person dealing with the enemy as he would if he met it alone.)

I suppose we can argue that we are still top creatures; we are here, after all, and where are the giant scorpions, the mile-long millipedes, even the basking amphibians which the scorpions turned into soup and then so horribly slurped up? Order after order of almost incredible creatures once ruled the earth, and went their way, none knows whither (well, apart from the ones that fetched up at East Kirkton. But why are we so sure that the same fate is not lurking somewhere to account for us? After all, the number of theories purporting to explain why and how the dinosaurs died out are as numerous as the stars above us).

The truth of the matter is that the universe, whoever is in charge of it, moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform. But I do feel that it need not have paused in its performance to create 10 ft scorpions and similarly proportioned millipedes, to say nothing of the giant harvestman spider, or for that matter the common or garden one, *Tegularia domestica*.

I forgot to say that Stan's other discoveries have included the remotest ancestors of frogs. I have no fear of frogs; indeed I rather like the little fellows. But I recognize that one man's smile is another man's cold sweat, and I send greetings and sympathy to all the batrachophobes who are reading this. Mind you, frogs eat spiders. But who will serve up Stan as soup for his scorpions?

Ronald Butt urges a more positive approach to German unity

Victims of a new prejudice

Germany and it may imply that peace requires a permanent army of occupation.

The full text of Mrs Thatcher's speech does, it is true, have sentences which soften the apparently brusque analysis. She acknowledges that the Western allies have always supported unification and that Chancellor Kohl and Herr Genscher, the Foreign Minister, both recognize the need to take account of all other interests concerned.

But well-informed and responsible political journalists throughout the British press interpreted Mrs Thatcher's words as they did in the light of what they already knew of her attitude from briefings and conversations with politicians and officials over recent months.

The Government does not, of course, share the insensate anti-Germanism that has recently surfaced in parts of the tabloid press. Ministers must turn with

disgust from the kind of bile displayed in a two-page spread in *The Star* after Mrs Thatcher's weekend speech; it spoke of "the old Teutonic lust", asked whether "the Master Race" will be reborn, gave pictures of Hitler's goose-stepping troops and showed pictures of young Nazis in Leipzig, which have as much relevance to the present situation in Germany as pictures of young National Fronters have here. It commented: "Let us forget, Hitler was a democratically elected leader," which is essentially inaccurate.

But the negative attitude of Mrs Thatcher's government is well on the way to turning a tried friend into a suspicious, anxious and perhaps inward-looking country. It is putting at risk the friendship established between people in the two countries. It fails to give due weight to the political realities, including the obsessional concern of the Ger-

mans that what happened in the first half of this century should not happen again, and their dedication to democracy. Worst, the Government's present stance is counter-productive.

The impetus towards unification has come not from the leaders, but from the people in East Germany in search of liberty. In many minor ways, unification is already happening, and it will bring great strains to the prosperous West Germans as they accept their obligations to their fellow-countrymen.

We need Germany in Nato for the safety of the West, but by its attitude, which is fully reported in Germany, the British government is encouraging German nationalism and damaging its best German friends. Chancellor Kohl faces a dangerous challenge from the Social Democrats, whose position will be strengthened by unification. This carries a risk of neutralism which could

really damage the precarious balance of power in Europe.

We should embrace German unity as a demonstration of the self-determination of a people who have given great things to civilization. We should give up our obsession with the particular horrors of Hitler's 12-year rule, which pretends that it represented something peculiarly German, and ignores the reality that in the worst atrocities there was no lack of willing executors among people of other nations.

We should look at German history (and French and British) over the century, and regain our perspective.

We are in danger of a new kind of licensed racism. Things can be said of the Germans which if said of any other people would be stigmatized as racist. We must put a stop to it, and ministers should give a lead by words of welcome instead of warning. We should make it clear that the case for Nato troops in Germany is for the purposes of the long-tried alliance, not as an army of occupation among a free people. The Government should change its tone. Does it think that nobody in Germany is listening — or that Germans have no sensitivity?

A road that fails to register



CLEMENT
FREUD

I found the place, parked behind PAU 1, went up some stairs and stood at a counter.

"Are you UTU3?" asked a woman, the way waiters ask "Are

you the prawn cocktail?" I filled in another form. The first line was "Address" such as the Reverend, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms or Miss. I wondered idly who has GOD! and whether it is more valuable than 1GOD. When we had completed the form, she said "Reg will come down and check your car; he won't be long." He was not long.

We went into the street and he asked me to open the bonnet. On my own car, there's a bonnet lock to the right of and below the steering-wheel. Not on a Renault 5 there is not. I tried to find the opening device inside the car. Reg had a go from the outside. We

toiled for some time before I found the catch near where a front passenger would put his left ankle: it clicked. Reg tried to open the cover from the front; it opens the other way, so that you can see the engine from the driver's seat. He scratched away some dirt and examined a metal plate welded to the cylinder block, bearing a longish number.

"We don't like numbers on plates welded to cylinder blocks," said Reg. "We prefer them punched into the block itself." There was not a lot one could say to that. He looked at me for signs of pecculation. I was wearing my best blue suit, white shirt, Lord's

Taverners tie and was about to tell him that Cecil Parkinson had sent me a birthday present when he said, "Okay then." We closed the bonnet.

They need a few more documents such as a road-tax fund and certificate of insurance for the newish Peugeot before it can become UTU3, and the Renault is awarded some spare number-plate whereby everyone will know its age.

Reg said they needed to keep the tax disc for the Renault, but if I was stopped for driving without one, I should refer the police to the Cherished Number-Plate people at the Department of Transport's Vehicle Licensing Office, 1 Zoar Street, SE1.

"With a Z," I said. "Just behind Southwark Bridge, sort of off Sumner Street." He nodded. I only hope they find it.



1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone: 01-782 5000

GODFATHERS IN BONN

Never in 17 years as leader of the West German Christian Democrats has Herr Helmut Kohl basked in such adulation as he received on Tuesday from 150,000 East German compatriots in the city of Erfurt. Less than a month remains till East Germany's first, and almost certainly last, free election as an independent state. Chancellor Kohl's appearance at the hustings will have bucked his supporters, who know that he is their greatest asset.

No less tumultuous was the reception given to the 76-year-old Herr Willy Brandt in Gotha. The former Mayor of West Berlin, Chancellor and architect of *Ostpolitik* has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance in the past few months, as an uncertain nation turns to this grand old survivor of the last great German crisis three decades ago. If, after nearly a decade in opposition, the Social Democrats return to power this year — first in East Germany, then next December in West Germany too — they will have Herr Brandt to thank. He and Herr Kohl are giving the East German election an almost presidential character.

Indeed, the voters appear to want West German politicians with no less eagerness than they covet West German living standards. Electoral defeat, if not extinction, faces the two parties which have dominated East German politics since Herr Erich Honecker's fall: the purged and renamed communists, or Party of Democratic Socialism, and New Forum. Both lack powerful godfathers in Bonn. Both were among the last to throw their weight behind German unification — a word increasingly heard on all sides in preference to reunification, held by some to imply a return to the German borders of 1937.

It is a specious distinction. It glosses over the fact that both communists and Social Democrats, though once firm advocates of the neutral reunited Germany for which they campaigned 40 years ago, had until last November vehemently dismissed any active

desire to abolish East German independence as "revanchism" or, in Herr Brandt's words of only a year ago, as "living a lie". The communists are condemned by their own crimes, for which nobody has yet been called to account before a court of law; but the SPD's inconsistent record ought to have been a formidable weapon in the hands of East German conservatives.

That this has not happened is due not only to their own errors, but to more serious ones made in Bonn. It has taken the non-socialists in East Germany too long to agree on a common platform, but it took the West German Christian Democrats too long to decide which horses to back. They have even now failed to use their political muscle to ensure that the German Social Union and Democratic Awakening, which are campaigning alongside the former communist stooges of the East German Christian Democrats as the Alliance for Germany, will be permitted to have their names printed together on the ballot paper: an important consideration under the system of multi-choice proportional representation which East Berlin is borrowing from Bonn.

By bringing the polling day forward last month from May to March, Herr Hans Modrow — in perhaps his final significant act — made it more likely that an electorate as yet unschooled in the niceties of democratic politics would allow itself to be guided into the familiar harbour of the Social Democrats. When he told Herr Modrow in Bonn recently that even vaster subsidies for the East German economy would have to wait until after the election, Chancellor Kohl was not, as one mischievous commentator suggested, giving the East German Prime Minister the same humiliating treatment which the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg received from Hitler on the eve of the *Anschluss*. Herr Kohl is fighting an election campaign, and he is not obliged to dispense largesse to his opponents.

CHANCELLOR IN PURDAH

With the Budget now less than four weeks away the Chancellor, Mr John Major, has most of the economic information which will be available to him. The picture is moderately encouraging, but it does nothing to detract from the need for a cautious Budget.

Growth has turned out to be closer to the Treasury's forecast than some other aspects of the economy. First estimates released yesterday suggest a figure of 2.4 per cent for 1989 as a whole compared with a forecast in the Budget red book of 2½ per cent.

But the environment in which this growth has been achieved has been much more inflationary than expected. Inflation in the final quarter of last year averaged 7.6 per cent compared with a forecast of 5.5 per cent, despite two further increases in interest rates last year. Even setting aside the effect on the published retail price index of the latest increases in mortgage rates, the underlying rate of inflation remains uncomfortably buoyant.

Recent trends in bank credit and the money supply have been rather better. After the big surge in bank lending in December, advances in January duly fell back, suggesting an underlying downward trend. Borrowing by consumers has been particularly weak, indicating that the high interest rate strategy put in place by the former Chancellor, Mr Nigel Lawson, is at length working. Growth in the narrow measure of the money supply has also fallen, though it remains above the Government's target.

Latest news on the fiscal side shows the Budget surplus shrinking rapidly. To some extent this reflects one-off factors applicable only to the current year such as a shortfall on privatization proceeds, factors whose absence next year will tend to boost the surplus again. But it also reflects lower growth in the economy and reduced buoyancy in revenue.

Faced with these varying signals Mr Major should play for safety. He has already made it

clear that interest rates are going to stay high for some time. A firm monetary policy needs to be buttressed by a firm fiscal policy, which in present circumstances probably means no net tax cuts. Given the uncertainties of forecasting the Budget surplus, the precise size of the public sector debt repayment next year is probably less important than the size and direction of the discretionary tax changes which the Chancellor makes.

A firm fiscal policy should not be seen simply as a way of bringing down interest rates from their present unpopular levels as quickly as possible. If markets were to receive that message the pound would quickly fall and a key part of the anti-inflationary discipline would be removed. Companies need to know that they will not be relieved of cost pressures by a further fall in sterling.

Mr Major has so far been either wise or lucky in his exchange rate policy. He elected to treat the fall in sterling after Mr Lawson's resignation as market turbulence and refused to put up interest rates again. Yesterday, for the first time since his appointment as Chancellor, the pound closed above the level it was at when he arrived. But he cannot rely on sterling's recovery continuing. The next move in interest rates in both Japan and Germany is expected to be upwards, which will erode the present differential in Britain's favour. Markets need to believe that interest rates will stay high for some time to help establish Mr Major's credentials as an inflation fighter.

Apart from the economic arguments, the political cycle also points in favour of a tight Budget. The risks are asymmetrical. If he is too lax, then he may have to tighten further in an election year. If he over-tightens, then he has the option of loosening a little at a politically convenient moment. Either way, the package to be announced on March 20 will be an important influence on the result of the next election.

ROLLING ENGLISH ROADS?

For the Government to drive a road through a cherished beauty spot as part of a programme supposed to show care for our environment is at the least unfortunate. For it to do so several times sounds like bureaucratic carelessness. To that extent this week's Ministry of Transport report on trunk roads has exposed itself to justifiable criticism.

In general the roads programme should be welcomed. The number of vehicles in Britain has risen by five million in the last decade to 23 million. A further rise of 142 per cent is expected by the year 2025. The prospect is a daunting one, and its impact on the environment could be profound.

Not only does it suggest more noise and ugliness but it also has serious global implications. In Britain, a fifth of all carbon dioxide emitted comes from cars. This is a problem which raises questions for the Government. The main one is how far it should regard the accelerating rise in road traffic as inevitable. Would it not be far more sensible in the long term for it to concentrate on improving public transport, thus curbing the growth in private vehicles?

Statistics seem to indicate that this argument is fallacious. A 50 per cent increase in traffic on the railways might remove only 5 per cent of it from the roads. Moreover some 65 per cent of all truck journeys are of less than 50 miles, which makes rail transport for them impractical. These well-worn figures should not be an argument for inaction, however. More investment in public transport is badly needed as part of a co-ordinated transport strategy. It is not a case of "either or". We need to spend money on roads as well as rail.

There is also a limit to how far motorists can be discouraged. The case for trying to do so in town centres is a strong one. London's traffic congestion in particular cannot simply be solved by building better roads. Some way must be found of controlling the private car.

However much one may wish it otherwise, a steady growth in traffic on our motorways and trunk roads now looks inevitable and must, in consequence, be planned for. The tendency of previous Whitehall forecasts to underestimate the rate of increase has only aggravated the present problem. With 1992 just around the corner and the prospect of sharper competition, the country would ignore it at its peril.

With this in mind there is much in the Government programme to be welcomed. It does not address the air pollution question, but that will require international action. The report does at least offer some investment in landscaping. Moreover much of the emphasis is on the widening of present highways rather than on the creation of new ones. There is an attractive logic behind this policy. It is considerably less expensive and it is obviously much quicker.

Those road widening schemes first outlined in the 1989 White Paper *Roads to Prosperity* should be completed in much less time than the 15 years taken to construct a major motorway. Still more persuasively, they should do less damage to the environment, confining the despoliation of the countryside to those areas which have already been badly scarred.

To sanction new roads across such parts of rural England as Twyford Down, however, or within sight of the white cliffs of Dover, is to invite deserved criticism. If we have to live increasingly with the motor car, or still worse, the juggernaut, we must use every means of containing the discomfort.

Roads are welcomed by those who use them when they use them. For those who seek easy access to the countryside their image may be tinged with green. When they destroy that countryside, however, the Government should stop and think again. Alternatives to such schemes may cost more, but in the long term the price is well worth paying.

Cemeteries sale issue still unclear

From Professor Malcolm Grant
Sir, You report (February 20) that Westminster still owns the three cemeteries that it thought it had sold, and that the Audit Commission has confirmed that this follows clearly from the judgement (sic) of the district auditor that the sale was "contrary to law". That conclusion may be a little premature.

Even if a disposal by a local authority is unlawful, purchasers enjoy statutory protection under the Local Government Act 1972, section 128. There is no obligation on a purchaser to investigate whether the authority has complied with the statutory requirements relating to disposal, or whether consent has been obtained to disposal at less than the best consideration that could reasonably be obtained. It has yet to be established whether that protection applies in this case.

Further, the cemeteries have since changed hands. The present owners have guaranteed title under the Land Registration Act 1925. They will continue to be the registered proprietors unless and until an application is successfully made to have the register rectified against them. Again, there is statutory protection for proprietors in possession, and the making of such an order is by no means automatic.

Neither of these issues is within the jurisdiction of the district auditor or the Audit Commission. Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM GRANT,
University College London,
Faculty of Law,
Bentham House,
4-8 Endsleigh Gardens, WC1.
February 20.

Scouts and Guides

From Mr Marcus Locke
Sir, Dr Paterson-Brown (February 17) states that the Girl Guides Association will remain a single-sex organisation. I would like to point out that there are some men who help out at Brownie and Guide meetings and hold unit helper cards issued by the Girl Guides Association. This would seem to indicate they are members of the association.

I became "pack leader" (and was awarded the Girl Guides Association's pack leader's stripes) to our local Brownie pack because at the time the Guide district could not offer the Brownie guide a Guide to help. Doing this I passed my service section of one of my Scout awards.

I am now chairman of a mixed Venture Scout unit and still help out at the Brownie meetings, although I am no longer pack leader. My sister, who is a Guide, has taken over the role. Together with my father, a unit helper, we provide protection for the Brownies against unwanted intruders.

I hesitate to suggest this, but can the Guide movement exist without the Scouts?
Yours in Scouting,
MARCUS LOCKE,
Corinthian,
75 Lonsborough Road,
Southsea,
Portsmouth, Hampshire.
February 17.

Cinema du Paradis

From Mr Richard Chatten
Sir, Jack Klinsowski (February 19) is correct in identifying the actor who played the dwarf in *La Kermesse Héroïque* (1935) as Delphin, but mistaken in tentatively attributing to him a further appearance in *Les Visiteurs du Soir* (1942).

Sadly, he was by then already dead, having committed suicide in 1938 by gassing himself in his Paris apartment. His only other film appearance had been as the headmaster in Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* (1933).

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD CHATTEN,
87 Hargrave Park,
Archway, N19.
February 19.

Spotted frogs

From Captain M. G. Rutherford, RVC
Sir, I heard on the radio this morning that there is worldwide concern about the decrease in the frog population. I am happy to report that my two-square metre pond here is positively overpopulated.

I counted 36 surfaced frogs yesterday, although as a sub-mariner I am certain that an equal number had "gone deep". These, of course, were undetectable.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM RUTHERFORD,
The Captain's House,
HMS Collingwood,
Fareham, Hampshire.
February 19.

Charity grants

From the Chairman of the London Boroughs Association

Sir, Although the London Boroughs Association recognises that the charity grants scheme (report, later editions, February 12) provides a worthwhile service and must continue, it objects to the way in which it is funded.

Under the present system, London's 33 local authorities pay a total of some £30 million a year into the scheme, which redistributes it to worthwhile organisations within the city. But what each authority pays is based solely on its population, with no regard at all for the benefits enjoyed by its ratepayers.

Crown Prosecution Service troubles

From Mrs Rosalind Wright
Sir, Whilst you are perfectly entitled to draw attention (leading article, February 20) to the alleged deficiencies and shortcomings of the Crown Prosecution Service, what are needed are some constructive suggestions to support the effort the present director, Allan Green, QC, is putting in to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

The creation of the CPS had the immediate effect of turning a small, specialist, elite prosecuting unit, the department of the Director of Public Prosecutions, employing some 60 lawyers and 150 non-legal support staff, into the headquarters of an enormous Civil Service machine with, like Marks and Spencer, "branches everywhere".

Again, like Marks and Spencer, managers have had to be put in to run the branches, the regional headquarters, and head office. Unlike Marks and Spencer, however, the managers who were employed were not specially recruited, trained, and experienced for the managerial duties assigned to them; they are senior lawyers, experienced prosecutors, who were diverted from their responsibilities as lawyers and given such tasks as recruiting staff, ordering office furniture, putting in information-technology systems, managing budgets, and filling in "dedicated returns to head office as 'performance indicators'".

The remedy is obvious and easy to accomplish — put the senior lawyers back in the role for which they were trained and for which they applied to join the CPS in the first place. Fill the administrative jobs with experienced, non-legally trained administrators with which the Civil Service abounds.

The lawyers will regain the job satisfaction they have sadly lost; promotion prospects for lawyers will not mean loss of "hands-on" involvement in the casework and, most important, the work of the junior prosecutors will be actively supervised and supported.

Yours faithfully,
ROSALIND WRIGHT,
17 Rowdon Avenue, NW10.

From the Chief Crown Prosecutor, Inner London Area
Sir, Your account (report, February 19) of the confusion, missing files, and missing witnesses at Cumberwell Green Magistrates' Court does less than justice to Miss Saw and numerous colleagues like her.

It is alleged that Miss Saw had to pick up the threads of cases adjourned from other hearings "because of missing files or missing witnesses". Miss Saw was appearing in Court 1, which deals

with guilty pleas and remands and not with trials. If a trial had had to be adjourned because of missing witnesses it would not then have been listed in Court 1.

Equally, cases are rarely, if ever, adjourned because a file, having been submitted to the CPS, is "missing". They are, however, often adjourned for the police to submit to the CPS further evidence or a full file for commitment to the Crown Court.

If the police do not supply the additional evidence or the commitment file by the time of the next hearing, an application may, regrettably, have to be made for a further adjournment.

The report concludes with the sorry tale of the collapse, due to the police being unable to provide a statement from the loser, of the case against two men accused of stealing a credit card. This, it was said, was a "clear error by the CPS". The judgment on the CPS was that they "failed to realise that a statement from the credit card company would have sufficed".

In fact, the file reveals that the CPS asked the police to provide evidence either from the loser or from the credit card company, and that the police agreed to do this. However, at the time of the collapse of the case the CPS had been provided with neither.

It is right that the CPS, a publicly-accountable body, should be held up to public scrutiny. It is equally important, however, that criticism should be fair and balanced.

Yours faithfully,
B. T. MCARDLE,
Chief Crown Prosecutor,
Inner London Area,
Portland House, Stage Place, SW1.
February 20.

From the Chief Crown Prosecutor, Essex Area

Sir, Concern has been expressed about the current cost of the CPS. Perhaps this could be placed in context.

It is acknowledged that Essex has the highest proportion of serious crime in its case load, yet, nevertheless, the average unit cost for disposal of a case in the magistrates' court is £46; for a case dealt with upon indictment before a jury in the crown court the figure is £460.

Taking into account that this expenditure also covers the amount paid to witnesses and counsel, the public may feel this is not unreasonable.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN GOODWIN,
Chief Crown Prosecutor,
Essex Area,
88 New London Road,
Chelmsford, Essex.

Future of Europe

From Mr Brendan Donnelly
Sir, Mr Tebbit (article, February 20) is certainly right to compare the imminent unification of Germany with the continuing unification of the European Community. But I am puzzled by his use of the emotive word "annexation" to describe both processes.

In each case, in the European Community as in Germany, unification will come about, is coming about, exclusively through freely-negotiated agreements entered into by democratic governments.

Mr Tebbit may disapprove of these agreements, but to describe them as annexations has no more justification than to describe Mr Tebbit himself as the tyrant of Chingford.

Yours sincerely,
BRENDAN DONNELLY,
Secretary, Positive Europe Group,
61 Leopold Road, N2.
February 20.

From Sir Yehudi Menuhin, OM
Sir, I pray that in the present deliberations on a united Germany's loyalties and allegiances we will not find ourselves debating two equally unrealistic alternatives — viz, Nato versus neutrality — while, in fact, an independent, strong Germany is deciding for herself.

Germany belongs to a European Community and the united Germanies together should belong to a united joint East and West-European Community — an alliance yet to be achieved.

To covet East Germany for Nato smacks too much of former discredited camp coalitions and pacts, political solutions which created, three times since 1870, the climate for German aggression and war. To suggest that a great European power should be neutral, especially when the eastern and western parts already adhere to two different commitments, is unrealistic.

Might, therefore, a suspension of a united Germany's military commitments, until such moment when political pressures will have achieved a united Europe — in de

Gaulle's prophetic words, "from the Channel to the Urals" — not be the wisest course to follow?

When, in the ripeness of time, this enlarged European Community will happen (and with the fluidity of present events it is not too sanguine to anticipate that necessary combination of good will and common sense from all quarters which could hasten the development), a federated Germany, along with all the other semi-autonomous regions, would embrace the collective obligations of the Community, i.e. —

1. To defend and keep the peace.
2. To provide an example of the federative process to areas whose problems can only be solved along these lines.
3. To plan to live within our resources and not beyond them, conserving and renewing air, water, earth, energy, food, and life with dignity, vigilance, and harmony.

Yours faithfully,
YEHUDI MENUHIN,
4 & 5 Primrose Mews,
Regents Park Road, NW1.
February 19.

From Dr Alan Sked
Sir, Your article by Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (February 14) will surely strike British readers as both anachronistic and offensive. Today's Community has simply no need to be managed by a Paris-Bonn axis. It is a Community of 12 states all of which have an equal right to guide its destiny; it is not a Franco-German condominium.

Your readers will also be alarmed at the thought of the French and Germans drawing up a new European constitution by themselves. Your authors' references to both Great Britain and the principle of subsidiarity are naturally welcome, but might not your readers suspect that at the end of the day we will simply be "made an offer which we cannot refuse"?

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SKED (Member,
Academic Council, Bruges Group),
London School of Economics and Political Science,
Houghton Street, WC2.

My association has presented the Government with details of an alternative funding system, with detailed costings, which allows for exactly the same amount of cash to be raised from the 33 London authorities. Under the LBA scheme boroughs will pay according to the need within their areas, as measured by the Government's standard spending assessments (SSA). The SSA system means that the poorer, inner-city boroughs receive more Government cash than the authorities with fewer social problems, and is a fairly reliable indicator.

Yours sincerely,
P. S. BOWNNESS
(Chairman),
London Boroughs Association,
23 Buckingham Gate, SW1.

Scrutiny of sand eels in Shetland

From Dr M. S. C. Havard
Sir, The letter (February 17) from Martin Heubeck brought attention to the plight of seabirds on Shetland. The strong implication that over-fishing of sand eels has caused the breeding failure of the seabird colonies is one that has been made before; however, it is difficult to prove.

The fluctuations in sand eel stocks may be entirely natural, or a decline in stocks may be due to increased numbers of herring, as their population recovery from the over-fishing of the late seventies and early eighties. Of course, added fishing pressure cannot help this situation.

To investigate what is really happening with sand eel stocks a joint research project has been set up involving Government agencies and non-governmental conservation organisations. With finance or practical aid from the Department of the Environment and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, the Scottish Development Department, the Nature Conservancy Council, the World Wide Fund for Nature-UK, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Cadbury's plc, this joint venture is a multi-disciplinary, three-year programme to evaluate seabird/sand eel interaction.

We hope that before too long more information about the system will allow regulation of the stocks to the advantage of both the birds and the fishing industry.

Yours faithfully,
MADELINE HAVARD
(Marine conservation officer),
World Wide Fund for Nature — United Kingdom,
Panda House, Weymouth Park,
Cotteshall Lane,
Godalming, Surrey.
February 19.

Thatcher and PLO

From the Secretary General of the Board of Deputies of British Jews
Sir, Your Political Editor's report (February 19) of the Board of Deputies meeting addressed by the Prime Minister on Sunday quotes Mrs Thatcher as having "urged Jerusalem to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation". In fact she did not anywhere in her speech refer to the PLO.

What she did say was "that Israel needs to talk to representatives of the Palestinian people from inside the occupied territories and from outside". This is open to various interpretations, but it would obviously be wrong to assume that it refers to the PLO and the PLO alone.

Your report might have added that Mrs Thatcher also said that "Israel has made an important proposal for elections in the occupied territories" which would certainly appear to commend the effort of the Israeli Government in their quest for a peaceful solution, arrived at by negotiation between Israel and democratically-elected representatives of the Palestinian people.

Yours faithfully,
HAYIM PINNER,
Secretary General,
The Board of Deputies of British Jews,
Woburn House,
Tavistock Square, WC1.
February 20.

Cable franchises

From the Director General of the Cable Authority
Sir, I hope that Viscount Torrington's letter (February 16) about control of cable networks will evoke some response in the City.

This authority has devoted much effort to encouraging the financial community here to consider investment in cable. We can pretend to very little success. It is seen as an investment which is too long term and whose prospects are too uncertain. Neither I nor anyone else can guarantee an investor a return on his capital.

But plenty of others are prepared to step in where the City fears to tread. The authority has received 120 applications for cable franchises in the last six months. In the same period 10 new broadband cable systems have started construction in different parts of the United Kingdom. Every single one of them has done so with North American finance.

This comparison of attitudes to investment seems to be not only to the disadvantage of the United Kingdom but to our discredit.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DAVEY,
Director General,
Cable Authority,
Gillingham House,
38-44 Gillingham Street, SW1.
February 19.

Doubtful indemnity

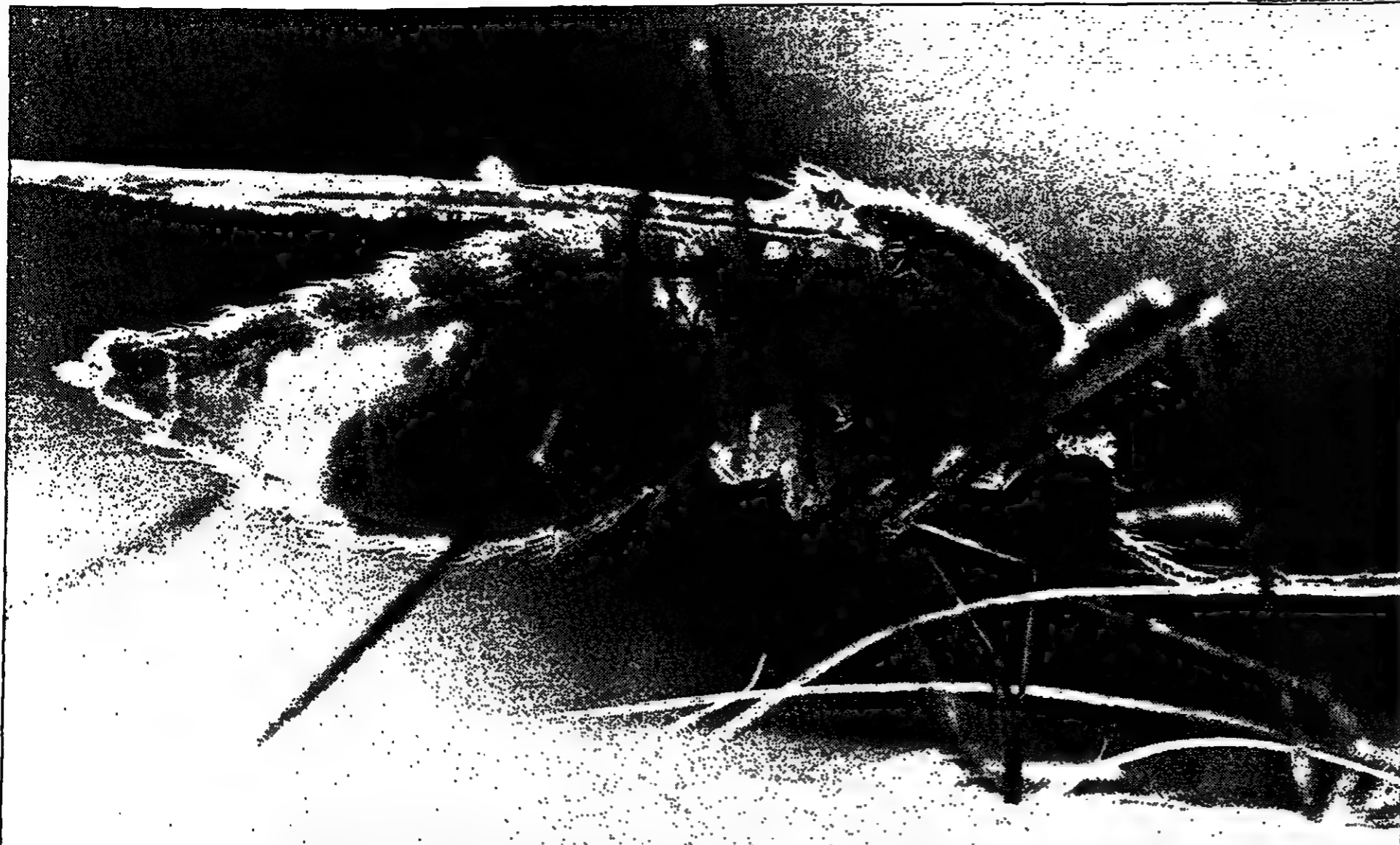
From Mr Raymond Durrant
Sir, I have received an entirely unsolicited invitation from the London Borough of Hammer-smith and Fulham to apply for community charge "poll tax" benefit on behalf of myself and my partner. A partner is defined as "a husband or wife or someone you live with as if you were married to them".

My enthusiasm to take the matter further was greatly diminished after I had studied the application form which required me to answer nearly 200 questions spread over nine pages of a 12-page document. Yours faithfully,
RAYMOND DURRANT,
11 Lena Gardens, W6.
February 19.

HEALTH

Sally Brompton reports on how British travellers are falling victim to the world's second greatest killer

LONDON SCIENTIFIC FILMS



Winged messenger of death: malaria-carrying anopheles female mosquito; other species are responsible for the spread of yellow fever, the virus infection dengue, encephalitis and elephantiasis

Malaria bites back

The alarming increase in the numbers of British travellers catching malaria, up 25 per cent on this time last year, is proof of man's losing battle against his greatest living enemy — the mosquito.

Despite the billions of pounds spent over the past 35 years on efforts to eradicate malaria worldwide, financial cutbacks mean the killer disease flourishes, as does the insect responsible for spreading it. "In the 1960s our goal was to eradicate malaria globally, but now the emphasis has shifted to malaria control in the vast majority of places," says Dr Brian Dobertyn, chief of the World Health Organization's Malaria Unit. "All we can do now is to try to keep deaths and suffering to a reasonable limit. Our success varies from place to place, but generally it is either static or getting worse."

With malaria-carrying mosquitoes surviving only in hot climates, Dobertyn is aware of speculation that the disease could spread as a result of global warming. "It is something we are watching," he says. "There are a few areas where the mean temperature has been observed to be increasing, and where malaria is getting worse. In certain areas, such as the highlands of Madagascar, where malaria has never before been a problem, it has now reached epidemic proportions."

With an estimated two million people a year dying from malaria (mainly in Africa) out of an annual 400 million clinical attacks of the disease, it is the world's second biggest killer (after the combined diarrhoeal diseases which afflict Third World children). Malaria is rife in parts of Mexico, Turkey and

the Middle East as well as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and other parts of the Pacific. The Far East has patches of malaria which are very resistant to drugs.

In Britain, which has around 2,000 imported cases of malaria annually, resulting in an average of six deaths, more than half the cases involve the malignant *Plasmodium falciparum*, the most serious and potentially fatal form of the disease which can be caught in most malarial countries. The majority of British malaria victims — many of whom had been taking anti-malaria precautions — caught the disease in Africa. About 2 per cent of British travellers to Ghana come back with a malignant form of the disease.

Of the 3,500 species of mosquito, only the female anopheles mosquito carries the four malaria parasites. This is one of the 30 species found in Britain, although our climate is not warm enough for the parasite to complete the 10-day lifecycle inside the insect needed to pass on the disease. The only recorded cases of people catching malaria in Britain in recent years were the result of mosquitoes arriving at Gatwick on planes from malarial countries.

Other mosquitoes found in tropical climates are responsible for the spread of yellow fever, the virus infection dengue, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), and elephantiasis — gross thickening of the skin due to chronic obstruction of the lymphatic vessels.

Despite widespread rumour, most experts think it improbable that mosquitoes carry the AIDS virus to any significant extent. "The HIV virus is very widespread in Africa, but it doesn't occur in children below the age of puberty, apart from the babies of infected mothers," says Dr Paul Clarke, medical director of the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad (MASTA). "Yet children of that age certainly die all the time from malaria, and get severely bitten by mosquitoes."

While other diseases passed on by mosquitoes need to reproduce within the insect, Clarke says there is "good evidence that the HIV virus does not multiply in the mosquito, which it would need to do in order to produce an effective dose". There is no recorded case of the HIV virus having been transmitted by mosquito.

The transmission of diseases is carried out exclusively by the mosquito. Mosquitoes feed mainly at dawn and dusk and tend to search for food at ground level, which is why they frequently bite their victims' ankles, feet and legs. Some live indoors, while others hunt for food under trees. Nobody knows why some people are more susceptible to mosquito bites than others. "It may be to do with odour, warmth, or colour of the skin, but no real correlation has been found," Clarke says.

The official line to help prevent mosquito bites is basic: cover up as much skin as possible and wear long trousers tucked into socks; rub in Deet, an oily substance which repels mosquitoes (but can be toxic on children under six) and which is now available from MASTA, both neat and in the form of impregnated wrist and ankle bands; take whatever anti-malaria tablets are recommended for your particular destination, and continue them for 28 days after arriving home. Sleep under a mosquito net impregnated with insecticide.

If you catch malaria — which causes flu-like symptoms and can take up to a month to manifest itself — get treatment immediately. It is particularly dangerous for pregnant women, as all forms of malaria can cause abortions. Unlike the malignant *P. falciparum* malaria, the three types of benign malaria can recur if not treated by a specialist. One of the problems in fighting malaria is the mosquitoes' increasing resistance to insecticides, and the malaria parasites' resistance to

drugs such as chloroquine — the most commonly used preventive and curative drug. "None of the precautions is fool-proof, but they do protect you quite a bit," says Dr David Warburton, senior lecturer at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. "We've proved to our satisfaction that even if you do get the infection, if you have been taking prophylactics you are less likely to die."

Another problem is the expense and difficulty involved in creating treatment facilities in malarial areas. Between 1955 and 1970 an estimated \$2,000 million was spent on a malaria eradication campaign in 105 countries, consisting mainly of spraying DDT and using drugs in massive quantities. Today, due to dwindling funds and enthusiasm, the World Health Organization has only \$7.5 million a year to spend on its malaria activities, plus another \$6 million from voluntary contributions.

Current malaria research focuses on a three-pronged approach to the problem: control of mosquitoes, control of the malaria parasites with new drugs, and production of vaccines. "Right now there is no malaria which isn't curable," Dobertyn says. "But in some places the drugs that work are too expensive for the country to afford. And there is still a tremendous need for more effective and better drugs, and safer methods of control."

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine operates a telephone answering service providing detailed information on precautions for travellers, on 01-636 7921; for information on anti-mosquito items, ring 01-631 4408. British Airways operates 18 travel clinics nationwide dispensing tablets and up-to-date information (01-831 5333).

'All we can do now is to try to keep deaths and suffering to a reasonable limit'

female mosquito, which bites and sucks the blood of mammals in order to breed. (The male mosquito prefers a diet of fruit juices.) After the female has fed, it finds some water in which to lay its eggs, which hatch within days. Mosquitoes are particularly fond of breeding in old car tyres in which water has collected; a recent shipment of tyres from Africa to the southern states of America resulted in the introduction into the United States of the aedes mosquito, which carries yellow fever and dengue.

In the flower vases of a Caracas cemetery there are said to be 50

million pupae of the aedes mosquito at any given time. In Cuba, during the last major outbreak of dengue fever, President Fidel Castro insisted that only plastic flowers be displayed in homes and cemeteries.

Mosquitoes feed mainly at dawn and dusk and tend to search for food at ground level, which is why they frequently bite their victims' ankles, feet and legs. Some live indoors, while others hunt for food under trees. Nobody knows why some people are more susceptible to mosquito bites than others. "It may be to do with odour, warmth, or colour of the skin, but no real correlation has been found," Clarke says.

Unlike the malignant *P. falciparum* malaria, the three types of benign malaria can recur if not treated by a specialist. One of the problems in fighting malaria is the mosquitoes' increasing resistance to insecticides, and the malaria parasites' resistance to

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Breast cancer prevention

While Michael Baum has been professor of surgery at King's College Hospital, his interest in breast cancer has embraced all aspects of the disease; the reward for his research has been a worldwide reputation. His move from the chair at King's to a similar post at the Royal Marsden Hospital has inevitably attracted attention and questions. Was it merely a desire to devote more time to research, in a postgraduate organization where he would be freed from the responsibilities of undergraduate teaching, but would find the right research infrastructure? Or had he finally tired of the uphill task of trying to train students in a teaching hospital where, in his view, the number of surgical beds in the academic surgical unit was no longer enough to allow his undergraduates the experience necessary to make good doctors in the future?

Baum insists that his move, which was at the invitation of the Marsden, was prompted by the desire to do more research, but admits that he has become increasingly apprehensive about the damage to medical school teaching, not only in King's but in all the London teaching hospitals, resulting from the shortage of money and hence of beds. Recently Baum had felt it his duty to write formally to the dean of his medical school, warning him that unplanned cuts in surgical beds meant students were no longer receiving the surgical training which he, conscious of GMC guidelines on the number of teaching beds needed per student, felt that they and their future patients deserved.

Although a professor of surgery with an international reputation, Baum now has access to only six beds at King's, a fraction of the number available when he was appointed. Baum's move has been celebrated by a donation of £100,000 to develop a laboratory to enable him to expand his current work, including research on gestodene, a drug which, if taken regularly, could prevent cancer of the breast. Baum feels that continuous treatment of this sort would be justified only if such a preparation could be incorporated into some other health-promoting pill — the contraceptive pill, for instance, or HRT treatment. By a happy chance, research workers may have uncovered a molecular structure which could have just such a role, and which Baum agrees is sufficiently encouraging to warrant further work on gestodene.

Women anxious about breast cancer should not be deluded by weekend reports which seemed to suggest that a lifetime of basking on a Mediterranean beach would prevent the disease. All the research workers had shown was a statistical relationship between vitamin D levels and the propensity to develop a malignancy. Rather more fish in the diet, or even a multi-vitamin pill, will achieve the same result without the hazard of developing skin cancer or a cataract.

Problem pill

Chauvinistic males who dread the day when their partners will expect them to take a contraceptive pill should not be alarmed by Press reports which suggested that one would be available within 10 years. Preliminary findings by World Health Organization research workers who have been prescribing the male hormone testosterone enanthate (promoteston) to 234 men, 38 of them British, had apparently given encouraging results. But *Pulse* magazine reports that Schering, which makes promoteston in West Germany, has dropped all further research into it because of fears over its efficiency as a contraceptive, and anxieties about its side effects.

The British subsidiary of Schering told *The Times* that it had never been involved in this particular research project. In general, research on the main male pill had centred on using male hormones in two different ways: either as a very large dose of the hormone, which would interfere with the control which the pituitary gland exerts on the production of sperm by the testes; or by prescribing a testosterone/progesterone mixture. Both lines of research had resulted in unacceptable side effects, which could possibly be dangerous. Testosterone, one of the products banned for athletes, may well increase muscle growth, but it

could also cause long-term problems with fertility, the liver, the prostate and the cardiovascular system; psychologically, it can cause excessive aggression.

Tooth brush

The north London schoolboy who needed 14 stitches after an attack by Rottweiler dogs will find the scars from the wound, which the casualty officer was able to stitch immediately, will soon fade. Better to have been bitten by a Rottweiler than by the job who all too often seems to own one, for humans have mouths which team with organisms dangerous to life and limb.

One teaching hospital has recently been sued because its casualty officer stitched a human bite wound, rather than cutting out damaged tissue first and then allowing it to heal slowly. The aggrieved patient claimed that to be bitten by another person is so notoriously dangerous that any doctor would be wrong to take a chance and stitch the wound at once.

Not all wounds are, however, afflicted in anger, love bites, too, have their dangers. *The British Journal of Surgery* recently reported a case of a woman who was so carried away by her portrayal of a vampire at a party that she left part of a broken plastic tooth in her boyfriend's neck; later a benign tumour formed around its remains.

Staying alive in the scrum

I've been playing with the England rugby team since November 1988. I play in the second row of the scrum and for that you've got to be tall, strong and mobile. Everyone jumps up for the ball, and if you're tall you can excel in that area. I'm 6ft 6in and weigh just over 17 stone. I've joined a gym in Battersea which has a combination of running machines, exercise bikes and weight training equipment, plus jacuzzis and saunas, and I try to train down there three times a week. Rugby is unusual in that you need upper body strength as well as lower body strength, so you try to exercise the whole body. People like Seb Coe are very aerobically fit, far fitter than I'll ever be, but you ask him to rip a ball out of a scrum and he wouldn't be able to do it.

As an inspector with the Metropolitan Police, I work shifts. The difficulty with shift work (I do one week of nights every fourth week) is that obviously you're sleeping during the day and your body clock takes a while to adjust, so sometimes you're training when you think you should be sleeping, and vice versa.

I just try to eat my meals at a regular time. When I get up when I'm working during the day, I always have cereal and toast. When I'm on nights and I get up at two or three in the afternoon, I'll have the same sort of food then. My main meal would be at three or four in the morning.



PAUL ACKFORD

The England team has a sports nutritionist; you've got to try to eat a lot of carbohydrates, a bit like the runners — pasta, potatoes, fresh vegetables, fruit, orange juice, chicken and broccoli — and cut down on the fatty stuff like steak and chips and fried foods. Luckily, I don't really put on weight very easily, so I try and eat properly for five or six days and on the seventh I'll indulge myself. I quite like Indian food, and a curry is pretty fatty.

I try to avoid puddings as much as possible. I quite like fruit salad if I'm out, but I'm as bad as the next man — I like things like chocolate mousse, treacle tart with custard, but I try not to eat them too often.

I don't drink an awful lot of alcohol nowadays. It's a myth that rugby players are hard drinkers, though it used to be the case. They used to say that when you were in training for a serious game, instead of drinking six pints a night, you'd drink two pints a night, but these days it doesn't happen so much — a few of the

boys in the England team are teetotal. It's quite a demanding thing playing international sport, you've got to adopt a certain lifestyle to enable you to be as best prepared as possible.

You are vulnerable to injuries because it's a contact sport, but, touch wood, I've been very lucky. I've never really ever had any serious injuries. I've done a few rib cartilages, and a shoulder joint, had a few stitches, but nothing which has kept me out for very long.

A lot of injuries are contact injuries — haematomas, dead legs — you get a lot of those. If you're tight gets hit hard by a shoulder or a head, the muscle bleeds inside and when it stops and clots it's quite sore. It's nothing desperately serious, it just means that every time you exercise the muscle, you re-start the bleeding and it takes a while to sort itself out. You get lots of finger injuries — dislocated, broken — and quite a lot of head injuries that need facial stitching, just from flying elbows or accidental boots, or clashing heads. But they are only small cuts and three or four stitches usually sort them out.

We played against Wales on Saturday and Brian Moore, who is the hooker, had a cut on his head early in the game. He had it stitched up at half-time on the field without anaesthetic. He didn't have to, he just wanted to play.

Interview by Pamela Novacka

If you think you can't afford BUPA cut this coupon.

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BOOKS

David Pryce-Jones on the books of scribblers who have become melodramatic moralists

Middle Eastern warriors

Robert Fisk and Thomas Friedman are veteran Beirut correspondents, for one or another London newspaper and the *New York Times* respectively. Fisk had a close shave with kidnappers, and Friedman's apartment building was blown up. Such is life there.

Fisk rejoices in the hazards, and as a writer insistently arouses pity and horror. As he tells it, he is repeatedly running into gun-fire and the yelling of four-letter words, but somehow managing to find what he is after. There is also an intentional process of self-romancing, of wishing to appear larger than life, which can raise a smile. The editor must print him on the front page, he believes, because he has risked his life getting the story. Friedman is calmer. Both men claim to see themselves as witnesses to history in the making.

Actually they were required to do something more modestly specific, which was to report the civil war destroying Lebanon since 1975, and the extra twists imparted to it by the Syrian invasion of 1976 and the Israeli invasion of 1982. What they wrote was certain to influence public opinion, and so be controversial. Fisk describes how in 1982 he was answering in person letters from angry readers, while at the very same time Friedman was "the most hated man in New York City", in words passed on via his father-in-law. There is a strict divide between the journalist reporting facts and news, and the politician with a case to make. These books reveal how two experienced correspondents had convictions compelling them to disregard that divide, and to think themselves right to be doing so.

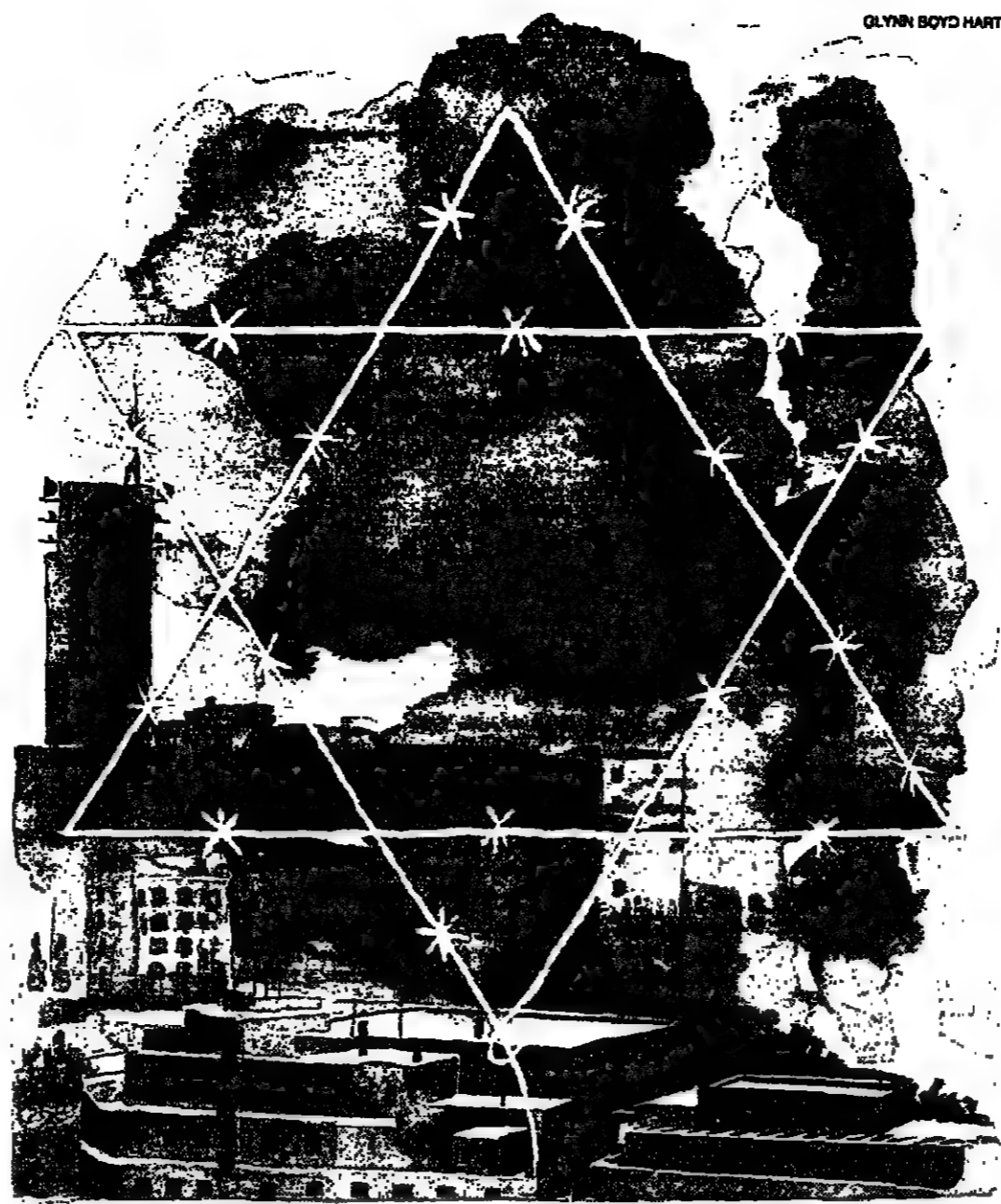
The letters and hate were of course sparked exclusively by the Israeli invasion. According to Fisk, this was "one of the greatest

military blunders in recent Middle East history", and a bonus only to the Soviets. Blunder it certainly was in several respects, but Fisk sidesteps the reality that the PLO ever since has had no alternative to pursuing peace through diplomacy. And what about the Iraqi attack on Iran as a blunder creating far more human misery?

To Fisk, the Israelis are murderers and thieves, and it is his urgent moral duty to expose them as such. It is wrong of them to call their opponents "terrorists" when that is what they are themselves. Repeated reference to the Holocaust is more self-serving hypocrisy. Many of the angry letters came from Jews accusing Fisk of anti-Semitism. On the contrary, it seems to me as certain as anything can be that if the Israelis were being massacred Fisk would be there with note-book and camera, the moralizing pouring from him in just the same style of personalized outrage. His lack of proportion and his melodrama are aspects of personality, but more importantly derive from an ideological mind-set surviving unmodified from the Sixties.

In that view, there are good guys who are friendly leftists and anti-American, and bad guys who are rightists and imperialists, like Israelis and Maronites, and naive or ugly America which puts them to it. The wish to be with the good guys drives Fisk first into partisanship, and then into much more confusion than he understands. For in the absence in the Middle East of successful and pluralist nation-states, each and every ethnic and religious community or minority must defend itself by force or go under. These are the politics that have long been customary in the region.

It was certainly not Fisk's intention to condescend to lesser breeds without the Law, but that is what his interpretation of the Middle East political and social order has led him. It comes down



to this for Fisk, that Israelis kill Arabs when they know better, and that is criminal, while Arabs kill Israelis because they do not know better, and that is cruel. In both cases, vicious character is the cause — and that is nonsense. The Sixties ideologue turns out to be as self-righteously superior as any Victorian colonel.

Friedman at least has a sense of proportion. Much of his analysis is true. Israel receives undue attention in the West, in his opinion, because it is a super-story with biblical and historical resonances that Palestinians could never match. Inter-Arab fighting goes unreported because nobody really cares about it, or expects otherwise: condescension in another form.

At Hama, the ruler proved that he would stop at nothing for the sake of power, and this leads Friedman to coin the useful

PITY THE NATION
By Robert Fisk
André Deutsch, £17.95
FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM
By Thomas Friedman
Collins, £15

phrase "Hama Rules", to cover the absolute logic of customary politics. It was a shock to him to realize that 1982 marked the turning point when Israel began to play by Hama Rules. The Israeli invasion called into question his own feeling as a Jew, as well as his impartiality as a reporter, and he greatly resented being placed in this position. Criticism of Israel became a moral duty for him too. Interviewing General Drori, the overall Israeli commander at Se-

bra and Shatila, he banged the table, adding with a Fisk-like touch, "I buried Amir Drori on the front page of the *New York Times*." But slowly he came to understand that Israel is only one among other communities in the region, using force to have its way in "a messy tribal feud".

Israelis aspire to a Jewish state, democracy, and all of Palestine, any two of which are possible but not all three. The *Intifada* prods them to make up their minds about what kind of people they want to be. In an Arab country, it would have been settled long since by Hama Rules, but in Israel's confines this would probably lead to civil war *à la* Beirut. Friedman is as sure as Fisk that he deserves the praise of all good men. That's how facts transform into convictions, and journalists into politicians.

Lean directness on last matters

FICTION

Andrew Sinclair

THE OTHER OCCUPANT

By Peter Benson

Macmillan, £12.95

SPARTINA

By John Casey

The Bodley Head, £12.95

THE EVENING WOLVES

By Joan Chase

Methuen, £12.99

THE COAST

By Nigel Barley

Viking, £12.99

Underwriting is the basis of insurance — and of some good novels. The *Other Occupant* by Peter Benson is underwritten to the scrap of truth. The title refers to an old woman, Marjorie, she finds that cancer occupies her gut and she must die. A drifter has come to work for her in Dorset for a week; but he stays to see her through and remembers the death by cancer of his father and mother — "the disease was a rain in my life".

Benson's art of understatement achieves the impossible. He makes a painful dying full of dignity and strength. Marjorie has courage and no self-pity. She had worked as a doctor in Africa for most of her life. She can cope with her own going. It is rare to read a novel in which the brief style so well fits the harrowing subject.

John Casey shares the gift of laconic truth, but in the American mode. *Spartina* is the name of a saltwater marsh weed, also the name of the fishing boat that the hero Dick is trying to build in Rhode Island. Married, with two boys, he meets a park ranger from a rich local family and has a child by her. Their love-making is like small boats jostling each other with their fenders or deep in the mud of the creek along with the clams. She helps him to complete the fishing boat he craves, the *Spartina*, although he feels the money is a stud fee. And she patronizes him, treating him as if he were an endangered species. She is spoiling his habitat by inflicting a baby on him.

In the end, Dick accommodates himself to his new situation, feeling like the tangled marsh weed, now brimming with the sea. This novel has been compared in the United States to *The Old Man and the Sea* and to *Moby Dick*. It is nothing of the sort. It lacks their power and mythology. Its virtue lies in a family story of a fisherman and a wealthy woman, a love between the classes that resolves itself in a reconciliation with nature.

Little Red Riding Hood is now held to be a fable of awakening sexuality. The *Evening Wolves* takes this interpretation further — the two daughters of a lone wolf fight for his love with his succession of women, who find him involved with his last pack. Joan Chase seems to enter into her adolescents as if she possessed them. She nurses and howls in their speech and actions. She has a gift for the oddities of American vernacular. And the narrative meanders on as sibling relationships do without conclusion.

there are spats and partings, kisses and meetings. The writing is so ingratiating and inclusive that the reader is made to read an alien terrain, the road world of the Southern United States with its neon gentility and brash shabbiness. This is an uncanny book which speaks with strange tongues about feelings common to us all and tests the bonds that tie blood kin together.

When the Reverend Emmanuel Truscott went to Africa in the last century, he thought he would change the ways of its superstitious and slave society. *The Coast* is the story of his schism, but funny failure. Nigel Barley is an anthropologist and a traveller with a merciful eye for cultural misunderstandings. His version of pidgin English is the most hilarious nativespeak since Mister Johnson spoke for Joyce Cary. The local king has the better of the missionary, when given the Bible and the promise of eternal life. "With this book I never die? You think I fool black man for sure... White Men chop us till we like to die because we no sabbay book. It be fool fashion. You give me shakehands," which means a greasing of the palm rather than a greeting.

The missionary is a brave fool, a limited visionary, and an acute commentary on the irrelevance of colonialism in the equatorial forests. Nigel Barley lampoons Victorian rectitude and commercial morality and local resilience without losing sympathy for the victims of his wit. Africa was no nest of singing birds when we got there, as my Cambridge tutor used to tell me. On the evidence of *The Coast*, he was absolutely right.

NEW HARDBACKS

The Literary Editor's selection of interesting books:
Elio & Lyric, by Luis de Camões, translated by Keith Bosley (Carcanet, £14.95)
Extracts from *The Lusad*, and shorter poems, illustrated.

Comrade Princess, Memoirs of an Aristocrat in Modern Russia, by Ekaterina Mestcherskaya (Doubleday, £12.95) 85-year-old survivor in Moscow remembers.

The Henge Monuments, Ceremony and Society in Prehistoric Britain, by Geoffrey Wainwright (Thames & Hudson, £19.95) Latest news from important new aspects of Antiquity series, edited by Colin Renfrew.

The Hidden Damage, by James Stern (Chelsea Press, £17.95) Memoir of a personal pilgrimage with W. H. Auden to postwar Germany in 1945.

A History of Education in London 1870-1990, by Stuart Macure (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, £17.99) The definitive history updated.

Mondrian, by Hans L. C. Jaffé (Thames & Hudson, £12.95).

The Pride That Was China, by Michael Loewe (Siddhick & Jackson, £20) Great Civilizations series, *ad ovo* to the last emperor.

Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination, by Anthony Pagden (Yale, £18.50) The Idea of Spain in Old and New Worlds.

Linda Christmas is a lively lady and very attractive, judging by her photograph on the dust jacket. She was once married to Norman Fowler, until recently Secretary for Employment. She has variable political views, supporting Labour when she first voted, and understandably changing to Conservative after her marriage. Though by this time divorced, "in 1979, I voted for Mrs Thatcher". In 1987 she voted for the Liberal Democrats. She declares herself a deliberately floating voter, which adds spice to her narrative.

She thinks "we need Mrs Thatcher to curtail our decline". But "we'll be yearning — when the times comes — to say a hearty farewell to hard noses and a warm welcome to soft hearts". She seems to have undertaken her travels through Britain with the hope of making up her mind, and the minds of those of a similar disposition, as to whether it is now the magic moment to dispose of Mrs Thatcher.

J. B. Priestley wrote *English Journey*, an account of his English tour in 1933. It was a remarkable book, full of sturdy thought tinged with homespun philosophy. Despite the heavy unemployment, in general he concluded that England and the English were not too bad, though, like many who work from armchairs, he was displeased by industrial buildings and factories,

State of nation dashed about

Woodrow Wyatt

CHOPPING DOWN THE CHERRY TREES
A Portrait of Britain in the Eighties
By Linda Christmas
Viking, £14.99

even when run by so enlightened a firm as Cadbury. He went to many of the same places as Linda Christmas: both liking the countryside, but neither of them much concerned with the beauties of architecture. In Liverpool neither noticed its outstanding glory, James Wyatt's town hall.

Linda Christmas was ambitious. She started in the Orkneys, visited Northern Ireland, moved zigzag down Britain, and got far as Perranporth in North Cornwall. Soap, snap, snap, went her recording eyes and ears. She dashed from place to place, randomly observing, and listening eagerly to any who would talk to her. In view of her looks, they were numerous. In Cornwall she was much impressed by the few miles of coastal scenery she saw, and by some Cornish irreverent nutters: "Cornwall resents English domination." A quarter Cornish,

with some Cornish roots from childhood still existing (my late brother was one time High Sheriff), I must tell her that Cornwall is not seething, like Azerbaijan, with separatist demands. True, the Cornish have a way of referring to the English as foreigners, but they do not burn their holiday homes as they do in Wales. (I am half Welsh too.) Most are rather proud of being in the Prince of Wales's Duchy. This is the trouble with quick, inevitably superficial jabs. Sometimes you get it right; sometimes you don't.

In Bradford, Priestley's home town (how would he have reacted to an Asian Muslim mayor?), she is fair-minded about the row over Ray Honeyford, the headmaster removed for his opposition to the council's policy of multi-culturalism in his school to replace assimilation. When she stays long enough to acquire some under-

standing, she is usually fair, unless her sentimentality overtakes her. It does in Liverpool, where she complains of concentration "on the symptoms of Liverpool's malaise rather than the cause". The cause is the bloody-mindedness of the workers, who refused to operate reasonably the factories benevolently showered on them. In the recent Ford dispute, Halewood was in the van. Soon, probably, Ford will be yet another disillusioned manufacturer to pull out.

Was the lady's journey worthwhile? Yes. She writes engagingly. Even when she pontificates beyond her capacity, she is enjoyable. She is typical of those floating voters who know that to revivify Britain hard things had to be done, but shudder when they are. She weters on the edge of wanting to reverse the policies by which Mrs Thatcher raised the standard of living, but does not seem quite to fall over that precipice. Her instantly bleeding heart grapples with her head, which sees a little further. I suspect, if mortgage interest comes down, and the community charge and NHS reforms are seen to be a success, she may well not want to risk Britain's rising prosperity, and will vote for Mrs Thatcher once again, though today Mr Kinnoch may be her fancy-man. On such depends the fate of governments.



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Aesop from Auschwitz

Philip Howard

THE MIRROR MAKER



By Primo Levi
Translated by
Raymond Rosenthal
Methuen, £12.99

This is probably the last we are going to read from Primo Levi this side of Paradise, and it consists of cold cabbage recycled, i.e. pieces of journalistic fiction and comment and reportage that appeared in his column in *La Stampa* over 25 years. Newspaper columns are seldom worth publishing between hard covers (or reviewing), because they date, and because the two art forms are quite different: quick daily sprint on the Turin omnibus making a single crude point, and then used for wrapping carry-out pasta *con ragu*, contrasted with a theoretically complex marathon lasting a few days, or even weeks of reading. Some of these columns are parochial, and a few have been overtaken by events, for example by the glorious winter in Eastern Europe.

But these pieces are worth publishing as a book for those of us outside the circulation area of Turin, because they are by Levi. He was one of the very few working scientists of our generation who could write grippingly across the two cultures about his mysteries, in this book dealing with matters that on other word processors would sound as dull as the primal clays that may be the source of life, or the invention of an arachnid varnish that really

sticks. He had an uncomplicated, direct, perhaps naive view of the world, with no message and nothing too heavy to preach.

In this collection, as journal, he interviews a herring gull about pollution in the Po, and writes an open letter to the poet Horace about his Sabine farm: "Come now, it isn't as modest as you describe it; today we would call it a

second home, and we would make you pay taxes that you would find it difficult to cover out of your author's royalties, or to obtain from Maccenas." As that suggests, the English translation sometimes trips you: "I have not forgotten 30 years of militancy in minor chemistry." He tried to simplify, like a good chemist, or a filter pump that sucks up water, and expels it clear. The fiery furnace he had survived at Auschwitz made him a broad-minded, melancholy but humorous humanist, as in his moving poem about how our friends and lovers mark us for life, so that we carry their imprints for ever.

In the title story, a man invents a metaphysical mirror, which does not obey the laws of optics, but reproduces your image as it is seen by the person who stands in front of you. It is the size of a visiting card, and is worn on the forehead — and it causes predictable trouble. Levi was a modern Aesop, whose humanist's creed brings tears to the eyes. He was a curious — insatiably curious in both senses — journalist. He was lucky to have found at *La Stampa* editors to publish such very unconventional, out-of-this-world columns. But *La Stampa* was luckier to have found a chemist-journalist who wrote uncommon literature.

THE ARTS

No, Cleo, not tonight

TELEVISION
Sheridan Morley

Way back in television ancient history, somewhere around 1955, I recall a series entitled *For Women* in which a blonde in glasses and modern dress with a clipboard would stand somewhere like the battlefield of Hastings and interview the participants, or at any rate elderly actors giving a reasonable facsimile thereof. The format died, however, along with the potter's wheel intermission film and is one of the very few never to have been disinterred even for the middle of weekday afternoons.

But last night two great historical figures were hauled back to camera life. *Timewatch* (BBC 2) investigated Napoleon's last great battle against the destroyers of his image, while *Signals* (Channel 4) had a post-feminist look at Cleopatra. Although not the greatest asp disaster in the world, an honour still reserved for the Elizabeth Taylor movie of a quarter century ago, *Signals* "Dreams and Distortions" was a disappointing ramble around some very familiar territory.

Working from her own new book on the same theme, Lucy Hughes-Hallett and her producer Jo Ann Kaplan invited such intelligent recent stage Cleos as Jane Lapotaire, Janet Suzman and Kate O'Mara to muse on the Egyptian Queen as a threat to male supremacy, encapsulating the fear of the powerful woman from Imelda Marcos to Margaret Thatcher.

From there they moved briskly on to a consideration of the Burton-Taylor scandal as a real-life replay of the legend, with Burton as the alcoholic hero destroyed by a "castrating" Liz. In itself that would have made a vastly more interesting programme, if they could just have left their cameras linger on it for longer than a couple of minutes.

On BBC 2, Bonaparte was ludicrously cobbling his official memoirs together, a project apparently of such tedious that even he, as played by Kenneth Colley, found it difficult not to drift into aimlessly nostalgic chats with a doctor who would occasionally ask such leading historical questions as "Tell me, did you ever make a mistake?"

The tale of Lundy starred as St Helena, and managed to look like an equally appalling place to spend your exile.

Bonfire of the literary world

Modesty in American literary circles has long been a thing of the past, but a new level of self-advocacy seems to have been reached. Last year Jay McInerney took his critics to task in an article in *Esquire* magazine more than five pages long. At least he had the good taste not to refer to his own books openly, which is more than can be said of Tom Wolfe, the man who can fit 2,343 exclamations into a single novel.

You may have already read Anthony Burgess or Jonathan Coe's raptures to Wolfe's article, "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast", but in America the debate has become more of a *cause célèbre*. Rarely has a single article — albeit such a long one — created such a stir in the literary fishpond. But, then, Wolfe has done everything in his power to maximize its effect: since it was first published in *Harper's* magazine last November, he has gone on the lecture circuit and appeared on television to defend his views.

More to the point, though, Wolfe has been employing his favourite tactic of mixing one part serious argument with two parts calculated provocation. His basic thesis is that over the last 40 years or so, the American novel, once "great", has retreated from realism into a series of literary postures such as Minimalism, or what Wolfe has dubbed "K-Mart Realism". But to add to this fire, Wolfe repeatedly turns to his only novel, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, for examples of the heights the novel can achieve through reportage and realism; furthermore, he quite brazenly implies that he is the sole heir to Dickens, Balzac and Zola.

It is this provocative combination of assertion and narcissism that proves Wolfe to be such a cunning self-publicist, for the writer of protest has had to return to him at every stage of the debate. The result has been that three years after it first saw the light of day, *Bonfire* is still being discussed. A remarkable feat in our supposedly three-minute culture. However, the larger issues of the

Freddie Baveystock watches the fur fly as Tom Wolfe offers advice to novelists

state of the American novel and the potential of realist fiction have been the ones to dominate the letters to *Harper's*, of which, incidentally, Wolfe is a contributing editor. On the first count there has been an overwhelming consensus of opinion that Wolfe simply has not read enough contemporary American fiction to rubbish it. The New York novelist Mary Gordon asks whether he has read Louise Erdrich, Toni Morrison or William Kennedy.

'He quite brazenly implies that he is the sole heir to Dickens, Balzac and Zola'

It seems unlikely, for in Wolfe's final word on the subject (to be printed in the March issue of *Harper's*), he repeats his disdain for those whose work is "cut off from real life" as well as his clarion-call for a return to "detailed realism". Obviously Wolfe failed to digest Robert Towers's long reply to his original article in *The New York Times Book Review*, in which he took Wolfe to task for his impoverished definition of realism and thoroughgoing ignorance of modern American letters. He called Wolfe's piece an "exercise in philistinism".

If this provided the most comprehensive rebuttal of Wolfe's argument, it is Mary Gordon who has most acutely identified what lies behind it: an intense dislike of the intelligentsia, especially those associated with universities. Her letter accuses Wolfe of "speaking from a position that comforts the uneasy" and of playing "the thinking man's redneck". While Wolfe's white suits and snobbish disregard for anything outside

New York make this a curious episode, it fits his patriotic exhortation of the idea of the American novel as well as his deep suspicion of foreign writers.

In their debate on television, Mary Gordon made a passionate case for a much broader view of literature and the role imagination plays within it, less than 24 hours before Salman Rushdie's eloquent defence of just those two things in the Herbert Read Memorial lecture read at the ICA. Gordon drew upon a wide range of literature to support her critique of Wolfe: at one point she bluntly asked him whether he had read *Un Coeur Simple* or *Anna Karenina*. According to a spokeswoman at *Harper's*, "There was a pause — it was eloquent — and then he said 'Yes'."

Speaking to *The Times* from her home outside New York, Gordon now says she is weary of the debate. She feels the terms of the discussion have been based on 19th-century expectations of what the novel can do, and have not properly taken into account the power of television and film to describe reality or entertain. "We just don't go to the novel for the same things any more. And as for this 19th-century kind of entertainment, not even Tom Wolfe can provide that."

Pointing out his masculine preoccupation with size and scope, she said: "Who says that the smaller, more personal things are less important? Wolfe is clearly unwilling to place the novel in a narrower, but possibly deeper, context."

The truth, *Harper's* editor Lewis Lapham suggests, is that "there never has been much of a market for the literary novel in the US, so it's hard to know what standards you're measuring it against." He professes himself "delighted" with the controversy. Certainly it is beginning to look like a joint publicity venture. Mary Gordon somewhat regrets "playing into that. I think we should all be quiet now and get on with our work." Come to think of it, has Tom Wolfe not just been paid an extravagantly large advance for a new novel...?



Wolfe: "the thinking man's redneck", or a campaigner for realism?

Taking up a challenge

CONCERT

Noël Goodwin

Philip Hosford
Purcell Room

Even today the Piano Variations which Aaron Copland composed 60 years ago remain a challenge to player and listeners alike. Philip Hosford, the American pianist who won the 1988 Terence Judd Competition in London, put Copland's work at the centre of a by-no-means conventional musical programme, and showed why it is judged such a pivotal work in Copland's output.

The resonances of what goes on between the notes are as important here as the notes themselves, though in the precise weight and sustaining of them the pianist's sensibility must be called into play. Copland's highly individual "note row" here is less of an exact science than if it were in serial technique, and a compelling emotional character in this performance — in relating to the American blues tradition in the background, for instance — was combined with an assured display of bravura.

In the first part of the programme Bach and Beethoven fared less well. The former's D minor Chaconne, in Busoni's magnificent arrangement, became too much the means to a clamorous keyboard broadside that almost bounced off the walls in the small hall, though the pianist's grasp of its musical implications was impressive — more so, indeed, than his curiously detached and sometimes peremptory account of Beethoven's A-flat Sonata, Op 110. Here, the final fugue almost fell over itself to redeem the *arioso dolente* theme.

Russian romantic chords in the pianist's more benevolent aspect from idyllically melodious Borodin (a Serenade and Nocturne) to Scriabin as a first encore.

Along the way were a glistering *Prélude and Fugue* (very fast) by Tchaikovsky, and what the programme-sheet delightfully itemised as "Les Ghinns" (I often wondered what happened to Les, wherein Lyapunov dispensed shimmering lines as well as exciting rhythms in a folk-dance from the Lezhbis that went well with steely-fingered pianism).



Knife edge: Skjoberg and Bloom

"To write is to pass judgement on oneself," declared Ibsen; and he never fulfilled that injunction with more donor relish than in his last play. It is a post-mortem in which the dramatist himself combines the roles of pathologist and dead body; an inquest on the human and creative talents he has misused and may have destroyed.

It is also a notoriously dense work, difficult for audiences to grasp and directors to stage. Even Archer, Ibsen's great champion, thought it showed signs of senility. It says something for Jonathan Kent's clean, spare, if underpowered, revival that the play emerges as comprehensibly as it does. The knife may not cut deep and dangerously, but we know what it is revealing.

What it reveals are the innards of sculptor Rubek, who created a masterpiece, shed the model who inspired it, and is now trapped in an enervating marriage with a bored young wife, Maja. Indeed, he seems terminally disappointed: as artist, man, everything.

All this is briskly, almost brusquely, conveyed to us by way

Climax of a senile genius

THEATRE
Benedict NightingaleWhen We Dead Awaken
Almeida

of introducing the main action. One living corpse meets another; Rubek is confronted with the model Irene, half-mad with resentment at a rejection she believes murdered her soul; or (to name the names at the Almeida) the Norwegian actor Espen Skjoberg, a natty, bearded blend of hobgoblin and Pirandello, does battle with Claire Bloom, looking like a well-groomed ghost with her silver-cream face, hair and dress.

The play's symbolism becomes more obtrusive, more apocalyptic, and culminates in what may be a joint suicide, and may be a transfiguration, on a mountain peak. It is an ending markedly like

those of Ibsen's other late, late works, *The Master Builder* and *John Gabriel Borkman*; and it tells us much about his restless old age. As his embarrassing weakness for young women showed, he too yearned for emotional resurrection. He too wanted to create a new poetic masterpiece, finer than those of his youth. He too was tormented with remorse, self-doubt and hopelessness.

But the play is more than autobiographical, or should be. It must leave us too feeling the desperate frustration of not being able to correct one's life-errors, recover the irrecoverable, or begin again; at least not this side of the grave. Unluckily, Kent's production proves stronger at evoking killer-avalanches — a roar, swirling smoke, white light playing across the vast, arctic sculpture at the back of the art-gallery-like set — than in generating the killer-emotions these demands.

The problem starts with Su-

zanne Burden's Maja, never sensuous enough to make plausible the parallel plot in which she deserts the inert Rubek for the excitingly shaggy gentleman-Viking, played by Miles Anderson. It is not improved by Claire Bloom, who must seem corroded past repair with vindictiveness. She successfully expresses nostalgia, regret and rueful affection; but when she brandishes a dagger at Rubek, she looks as if she's proffering picnic cutlery, not threatening to skewer him.

Skjoberg's Rubek — if sometimes uncomfortable with English syllables, the text, and his fellow-players — gives more complex, interesting performance. There is sardonic humour here, and anger, and even a weird other-worldliness, reminiscent of the late Ralph Richardson. But one still misses something central: an intensity of self-hatred and, at times, despair. Kent's production is lucid, yes. It is also bland.

Jeremy Kingston

The Seagull
Birmingham Rep

Where this production differs from other productions of Chekhov, is that the funds have been largely assembled by one of the actors, Neal Foster, who plays Konstantin. You may remember reading about his enterprise last summer, in button-holing Jack Lemmon, Dustin Hoffman, Joel Deuch and other theatrical celebrities as they left their dressing rooms, and asking to be allowed to interview them before a paying audience.

He had already asked Birmingham Rep if they would stage a production if he raised the cash, and after crawling out from under their desks or clambering down from the ceiling — or wherever else a management retreats to when faced with such an unorthodox request — they agreed. Foster looks fragile enough to be blown away by a moderate wind, but clearly has nerves of steel.

And has it been worthwhile, from an audience's point of view? Fortunately, yes, though I think the proximity of a studio production works against this particular play. Either that or the direction, Anthony Clark's first since becoming artistic director of the Rep, has not assessed the dimensions of the space and scaled down the louder performances accordingly. We are very close to the actors, who are even closer to one another.

The settings by Liz Fettle are eye-catching, a 3-D version of an Edward Munch lakeside — Nordic, of course, not Slavic but

When cheek pays off

suitably melancholy as a background to the distracted love affairs. The play within the play is acted upon a smoothly rounded rock in the foreground, assisted by an unusual battery of sound effects from kitchen sinker and the long reflection of a low sun — Munch's trademark — cropping up again on the floor and corners of the interior scenes, enclosing the characters in a mood of isolation at the other end of nowhere.

Foster's last and edgy Konstantin, a performance of raw nerve-endings and choked rage, is unusually partnered by Emily Raymond's Nina who has lovely eyes, and a mysterious smile, but so passionate a delivery that her crucial self-discoveries do not seem her own. Roberta Taylor's sour Arkadina misses the character's glamour, though I liked the way she aways from Peter Guinness's pugilist-like Trigorin as he goes rhapsodising on about Nina's youth.

Clark is generally good with the comedy, and Angela Moran's Polina is unexpectedly funny, sliding along the garden seat to be close to her beloved doctor. There is also a peach of a performance from Michele Wade as Masha, a sort of roguish Ophelia snorting snuff as voraciously as though she had shares in the company.

Seduced by sentiment

DANCE

John Percival

Swan Lake
Covent Garden

Of the guest stars who have appeared lately with the Royal Ballet, Alhynai Aslymuratova is becoming, after Sylvie Guillem and Laurent Hilaire, the most frequent visitor. Tuesday brought her first Covent Garden *Swan Lake*, and during this season we shall have seen her in three different roles with the local company, apart from whatever her home company, the Kirov Ballet, may show in June at the Coliseum.

It is always a pleasure to see this youngest of Leningrad's leading ballerinas so slim and supple, so exotically beautiful, so dedicated in everything she does. She makes every step ring clear in shape and meaning, and each moment her body and limbs form a harmonious, highly individual composition of curves and angles.

That said, I have to admit that, of all the ballets I have seen her in, *Swan Lake* seems to me to suit her least. That is largely, I believe, because of the way the ballet is produced in Russia nowadays, omitting the mime and eliding some of the choreography for big, sentimental effects.

The proof of this can be seen in the difference between her Odette in Act II and in Act IV. The former stays close enough in its London and Leningrad stagings for her and Jonathan Cope, her Siegfried, to perform mostly her own accustomed version. The result is elegant but cool, brittle; too much of the bird-like arm movements, not enough of the love story. But in the last Act, the



Aslymuratova: exotically beautiful

musical and structural differences are bigger, so she has to fit in with the Royal Ballet's version, and how much better she looked for it. Ivanov's quiet, elegant choreography suits her, and so does the traditional mime, which she gives with great clarity and conviction. Here we saw the Odette she could be if she played the whole ballet in the old-fashioned way: simple, unaffected, touching and true.

Her Odile in Act III is technically and emotionally, as well as temporally, between those two Odettes. She seemed to be seducing us in the audience rather more than Siegfried; but those fast, tight turns of every kind are amazing, and in one diagonal of little leaps she seemed to pounce on her transfixed princely prey like a jungle creature.

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THE ARTS/FILM

David Robinson reviews new releases *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Cinema Paradiso*, *Dad*, *Monkey Shines*, *Winter People*...

Race relations in the driving seat

Bruce Beresford's *Driving Miss Daisy* (U, Warner West End) has edged *Born on the Fourth of July* out of top place in the American box office charts, won a heap of Oscar nominations, and earned top acting honours for Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman at the Berlin Film Festival — so demonstrating that there is still a place for charm in the movies.

Adapted from a three-character play by Alfred Uhry, it is set in Georgia and traces the slow-developing relationship of a crotchety old Jewish widow and the black chauffeur she unwillingly takes on when her own driving becomes dangerously erratic.

The action spans the period from 1948 to 1973, and reflects slowly changing Southern attitudes to race. The characters are so conditioned by the society in which they have grown, that neither recognizes the racism implicit equally in Miss Daisy's imperious ways with blacks, and in Hoke's chauffeur's amused and philosophical acceptance and unvarying "Yas'm".

Imperceptibly their relationship develops with the times. As a Jew, Daisy herself experiences racism, and at the end, helpless in an old people's home, she brings herself

CINEMA

to confess that the black man is her best friend.

Uhry's screen play is sharp, funny, unsentimental; and the performances deserve every prize they get. The octogenarian English actress Jessica Tandy gives a huge range of shadings to Miss Daisy, from acidulous to tender; and Morgan Freeman, in his original stage role, brings a lot of endearing cunning to Hoke's management of the old lady. Dan Aykroyd — more usually seen in over-the-top comic roles — skilfully subordinates himself in the role of Daisy's likeable doltard son. It is a film of unimpaired delight.

Charm also infuses every frame of Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* (PG, Curzon Mayfair), just nominated for Best Foreign Film Oscar. This is unrestrained, sentimental nostalgia for the days when the cinema stood alongside the parish church as the centre of the community life of every little provincial town.

A successful film director (Jacques Perrin), learning of the death of his friend Alfredo, remembers his home-town and childhood; his war-widowed mother, his short-comings as altar boy, and his passion to get into the projection box of the movie theatre, where

Alfredo rules supreme — a giant in the town, provider of the stories with which the cinema nightly enthralls the populace.

The glimpsed fragments from forgotten Italian pot-boilers, the too-passionate kisses which the local priest snips out of the films (to be secretly treasured for the future), the lurid posters, the faithful audience: all remind us that movies are the folk-tales of the 20th century, as necessary and precious and regretted in their loss as any other communal culture.

This film again triumphs by the central performances: the incomparable Philippe Noiret as the solemn Alfredo, and Salvatore Cascio as the infant Salvatore, an endearing and defiantly uncute little comedian. If the later scenes — with Alfredo retired and Salvatore grown-up — are less successful, it is probably mostly due (as Tornatore explains in the interview below) to cuts forced on him by the initial hostile reception of his film.

The charm intended in *Dad* (PG, Cannon Haymarket, Shaftesbury Avenue) is quite irresistible. Jack Lemmon plays the title role in this mawkishly sentimental tale whose moral is that fathers and sons should demonstrate their love while they still may. The

script, from a novel by William Wharton, manages to drag us through two very medical death-bed scenes, from the first of which Lemmon miraculously revives to enjoy an embarrassing second childhood. Olympia Dukakis plays his self-centred and overbearing wife; Ted Danson as his son is the most sympathetic and credible character. Some things are better left unsaid; but *Dad* says them all, over and over. It is directed, with ambitions to look like *On Golden Pond*, by Gary David Goldberg.

Charm is notably absent from George A. Romero's science-fiction thriller *Monkey Shines* (18, Prince Charles) in which the paraplegic hero (Hollywood is currently obsessed with sickness and infirmity) falls victim to a monkey who, having been injected with human brain serum, develops killer tendencies.

Winter People (15, Cannon Tottenham Court Road), directed by Ted Kotcheff, is the kind of hillbilly melodrama that has not been seen this past half-century, with bewhiskered mountain-men, feuding families, bygone babies, and a mild-mannered stranger (Kurt Russell) who survives ridicule and humiliation to win love and respect at the fade-out. The brightest spot is Lloyd Bridges as a fly patriarch.



Imperious: Jessica Tandy as Daisy Werthan, with her trusty chauffeur Hoke Colburn (Morgan Freeman)

... and Geoff Brown looks at *Blaze* starring Paul Newman, plus *Hamlet Goes Business* and *Romero*

The stripper, the sinner and the saintly bishop

Quotation of the week: "The three best friends the poor people have ever had are Jesus Christ, Sears and Roebuck, and Earl K. Long." The first two we know, and *Blaze* (15, Warner West End), a captivating slice of Americana from writer-director Ron Shelton, tells us about the third. Like his younger brother Huey, he was Governor of Louisiana; a Democrat, he stood up for civil rights and social welfare. More to the movie's point, in 1959 he began a love affair with a red-headed stripper, Blaze Starr. The scandal terminated his political career and, shortly afterwards, his life.

Paul Newman brings this sympathetic rogue leaping back to life: the face seems deliberately lined beyond Newman's years, the voice a husky croak through decades of haranguing. Careworn and in illing mental health, Long can still respond to the innocent bounce of *Blaze* the stripper — amiably portrayed by a relative newcomer from Canada, Lolita Davidovich. The affair is mostly played for comedy, though the pair's affection seems real: there is nothing sleazy about this May to December romance.

Shelton's film is a worthy successor to his baseball comedy *Bull Durham* — reveals in its flamboyant tone and period setting, Newman's sole starring presence in a character role seems to



Lolita Davidovich as Blaze Starr: the good-time girl who gets her man

have hurt the film in America; though the jostling gallery of fresh faces, cast as back-room cronies, remains one of its many pleasures. *Blaze* is a fine addition to Hollywood's forays into political history, and a welcome sign that adult intelligence in the movie capital may be staging a comeback.

Hamlet Goes Business (15, Everyman) finds Aki Kaurismäki, the bad boy of Finnish cinema, on better form than in *Leiningrad Cowboys Go to America*. Shakespeare's plot supplies a sturdy

springboard for his canonic satire on the ways of the world (Hamlet is now a moon-faced elder who inherits a business empire poised to give up mills and shippards for Sweden's rubber duck industry). The oppressive black-and-white photography bestows a unifying style; the film quietly throbs with B-movie madness. Rib-poking performances would have ruined its dour demeanour; but the cast (headed by comedian Pirkko-Pekka Petelius) display icy composure, whether dispatching Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the Oslo Sheraton or brainning an opponent with a radio set.

Considering Raul Julia's usual shady characters, it seems odd to find him under an archbishop's mitre in *Romero* (15, Cannon Tottenham Court Road). Oscar Romero, that is: the gentle man of God from El Salvador who spoke out against his country's torment and died from an assassin's bullet in 1980. Worthless drips from this venture by Panliss Pictures, an outfit dedicated to humanitarian entertainment. Julia's aura of simple dignity helps smooth Romero's switch from bushy-headed to protesting lion. A firebrand director might have avoided stereotypes of the peasants and military and sharpened the political thrust. But the safe, decent *Romero*, directed by the Australian John Duigan, was never meant to be agit-prop.

Tapping a gold mine

A weekly selection of films recently released on video. The year refers to the time of first release, or in the case of television films, of first broadcast.

VIDEOBOX
Geoff Brown

BERT ROBBY, YOU'RE A FOOL (Warner, 15): Carl Reiner's whimsical vehicle for Robert Lindsay, stage star of *Me and My Girl* — cast as a British miner, with a gift for hoofing, at large in Hollywood. Thin and tiresome, despite Lindsay's talent. 1988.

CLEOPATRA (CBS/Fox, PG): Joseph Mankiewicz's 1953 epic, spread over two cassettes — an ornate, dreary trudge through the familiar story, though Rex Harrison has a good time as the acerbic Caesar. Taylor and Burton's performances now seem far less interesting than their off-screen antics.

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS (Virgin, PG): Filmy but funny remake of the 1964 *Bedtime Story*, with Steve Martin and Michael Caine as competing conmen (one slick, one shaggy) working the French Riviera. Directed by Frank Oz. 1989.

GETTING IT RIGHT (MCA, 15): Swinging London struggles to swing again in this strained version of Elizabeth Jane Howard's novel about a hairdresser's belated introduction to sex. With Jesse Birdsall, Helen Bonham Carter; directed, improbably, by Randal Kleiser, who gave us *Grease*. 1989.

MAJOR LEAGUE (MCA, 15): Predictable material — misfit baseball team turns victorious — overhauled with vigour and a degree of rude charm by writer-director David Ward. The team's pin-ups include Tom Berenger and Charlie Sheen. 1989.

THE NAKED AND THE DEAD (Odyssey, PG): Norman Mailer's gutsy war novel about a platoon in the Pacific gets somewhat flattened by Hollywood's steamroller. Stereotyped characters, but punchy action scenes. Raoul Walsh directs. 1988.

PAPERHOUSE (Vestron, 15): A disturbed girl's drawings of an imaginary house come to life in her dreams — cue for a British horror fantasy with far more imagination than most. A promising debut by rock-video director Bernard Rose. 1989.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE (Warner, PG): Uninvolved attempt to update the amok wood of 1940s thrillers, with Burt Reynolds as a dishevelled ex-cop facing a murder charge and Theresa Russell as his defence counsel, choked with designer jewellery. Lacklustre direction by Michael Crichton. 1989.

SHALAKO (Warner, PG): Botched international Western with a potent cast (Sean Connery, Brigitte Bardot) and a good subplot (an aristocratic safari is caught among Apaches). Dream of the film that might have been. Directed by Edward Dmytryk. 1968.

WHO'S HARRY CRUMBY? (PG): John Candy as an ostentatious eye investigating a kidnapping. Mauling by most critics, though if your funnybone is in a silly position there are enough things to enjoy. Paul Flaherty directs as though he were filming a live-action comic-strip. 1989.

Tornatore's *Paradiso* lost and regained

Giuseppe Tornatore knows by heart what the critics wrote about *Cinema Paradiso* when it first came out in Italy. "It is full of historical mistakes", "Philippe Noiret acts like a cartoon character". "It is anti-feminist because the women in it are anti-cinema". "The music is terrible". "Because Tornatore is young, he must have stolen the subject from someone else". "It is too melodramatic". "Tornatore is too ambitious and trying to be an Orson Welles". "The language is that of a TV feature". "It is a blackmailing picture". Well, those are just some of them.

"Above all they said it was too long. It ran two and a half hours, so out of despair I cut out 25 minutes, which I regret very much. And of course they criticized the shorter version just the same. In fact they were harder than before. It was not all the Italian critics, but unfortunately it was the most influential ones."

Outside Italy, the film has been a major critical success; and even in Italy, Tornatore's fellow directors are enthusiastic and encouraging. The veteran director Luigi Comencini told him he had "reconciled him with cinema" and Alberto Sordi rejoiced to be "face to face with a true film maker".

"When the original version came out," says Tornatore, "it was a total flop — box office, critics, everything. It did really badly. I was taken off almost immediately. I simply couldn't find a movie house that would show it. That's when I cut it. And then came the miracle of Cannes. People liked the film, and it ended up getting the Grand Prix of the Jury. After that the attitude of the Italian public changed; but not the critics."

Is it possible that the critics acted out of some misguided sense of solidarity with the veteran Ettore Scola, whose film *Splendor*, also about the rise and decline of a provincial movie theatre, came out at the same time? (Scola's film was shown in London last year.)

David Robinson meets the Sicilian director whose nostalgic film won a Grand Prix at Cannes despite a critical mauling in Italy



Defiantly ascetic: Salvatore Cascio as the small boy obsessed with the behind-the-scenes magic of cinema

"Maybe, though it would be idiotic. For one thing, Scola himself was very nice about my film; and for another the two pictures are entirely different. "Of course it is a funny coincidence that we should both be making films about nostalgia for the make films about nostalgia for the great days of cinema; but that's all they have in common. Scola's approach is much more intellectual and modern. I have a more narrative approach, with a more classical, maybe more banal story."

"Also, the movies shown in Scola's *Cinema Splendor* are always works by great directors, while my *Cinema Paradiso* shows everything — bad, good, adventures, big box office films, the lot. I feel my film is more realistic, while Scola is more symbolic. And I think I am more concerned with the magic and nostalgia."

"But the subject is in the air — maybe because the situation of movie theatres is so bad now. I hear that Peter Bogdanovich is making a sequel to *The Last Picture Show*. The movie house is losing its central role in the relationship between the audience and the movie. It is the same as if the church in Italy were no longer to mean anything to the people. If

that happened we would be making movies about the disappearance of the churches."

A small, neat, bespectacled man with a face which alternates between broad beaming and sudden looks of deep anxiety, Tornatore was born 33 years ago in Bagheria, a village near Palermo in Sicily. He first worked as a photographer, but then turned to making documentaries for television. His first feature film, made in 1987, was *Il Camorrista*, starring Ben Gazzara, about the Mafia in Naples, and the links between organized crime and the state. The subject could hardly be

further from *Cinema Paradiso*. "I want every movie to be different. Also I didn't want to have anything autobiographical in the first film. It's dangerous for new directors to do that."

Cinema Paradiso is "about ten per cent autobiography, the relationship of the little boy to the movie theatre. Although the ideas and the memories are mine, the things that happen are fiction." Does he personally remember a time when the cinema was the focus of the community, along with the church? "I started to go to the movies when I was about four or five years old, around 28 years ago. Small-town life in Sicily had hardly changed since the Forties and Fifties."

So the atmosphere of the place and the situation of the cinema theatres in the film is very much what he experienced as a child. "But since I decided to set the film at the end of the Forties and beginning of the Fifties, I did a lot of historical research, talking to old projectionists and theatre proprietors."

The detractors of *Cinema Paradiso* have been somewhat confounded by the film's success abroad. Since Cannes, it has picked up an enviable collection of prizes, including European Film Awards for Philippe Noiret and Tornatore himself, a Golden Globe and the Italian cinema's nomination for the Best Foreign Picture Oscar.

The experience, though, has evidently made Tornatore suspicious of fate. "Were all the bad things that happened to the film in Italy a true tragedy for me or not? Of course I was very miserable and depressed at the time. But sometimes tragedy has an opposite effect. Something very positive can come out of negative things. The trouble is that now I start to fear that in turn, out of all the positive things that happened afterwards, something negative may come." His big grin suggests, however, that with the vindication provided by world success, the fear is not too serious.

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Making
the fur
fly

Peter Waymark

With Harolds, of all places, closing its fur department, the fur coat could soon become a footnote to the history of women's fashion. The taxi-fur lobby seems to be winning, to the extent that furriers are reluctant to appear on television for fear of reprisals. John Pitan's 40 Minutes film, *Adventures in the Skin Trade* (BBC2, 9.30pm), entertainingly charts the decline, while showing that the myth and the memory lingers on. Sandra Dorne, a film actress



Mary Henry: the 78-year-old widow in her musquash coat (BBC2, 9.30pm)

of the Fifties, regrets the passing of the fur-furrier and her present attitude is equivocal: "I am for wildlife — but I am also for glamour." And a 78-year-old working-class widow from Tyneside recalls her miner husband finally being able to redeem his promise to buy her a fur coat: "I didn't feel as if I'd been lifted up socially. But I did feel I'd achieved something". On the other side of the fence, the former model Baroness Thyssen stopped wearing fur 15 years ago after an appeal from the World Wildlife Fund and Kate O'Mara refused to wear furs in the rich person's soap opera, *Howard's Way*. The question of which, and how many, members of the Royal family sport fur is tentatively posed and quickly dropped. It would not do to encourage demos outside Buckingham Palace. Pitan points out that the anti-fur campaign has had little success outside Britain, where animals do not occupy the same place in the national consciousness. It has had no effect on one citizen of the United States. Asked to justify herself, Barbra Kitt replies disarmingly: "Fur keeps me warm, much more than a man. You guys come and go, the fur's always there".

Launching a series that will also take in the hamburger, the aspirin, the answerphone and the condom, *Small Objects of Desire* (BBC2, 10.10pm) charts the curious history of the deodorant. Anyone who thought that roll-ons and squirt-ons were a phenomenon of the present century will be quickly disabused. The ancient Egyptian achieved a similar effect with a mixture of frankincense and porridge. But this imaginative little film concentrates on relatively recent attempts to banish natural smells and the way this has been presented by advertising, as the emphasis on social ostracism (remember the horrors of BO?) has given way to linking deodorants with sexual athleticism.

BBC 1

6.00 *Casualty*.
6.30 *BBC Breakfast News* with Nicholas Wintchall and Chris Lowe. Includes regular news headlines, business reports, sports bulletins, regional news, weather and travel information, and a review of the morning newspapers by Paul Cattan. 8.55 Regional news and weather.

9.00 News and weather followed by *Open Air*. Viewers comment on yesterday's television. To contribute ring 051 814 0424.

9.30 *Kitty*. Robert Kilroy-Glik chairs a studio discussion on a topical subject.

10.00 News and weather followed by *Going for Gold* (r).

10.25 *Children's BBC*, presented by Simon Parkin, begins with *Playdays* which visits Scotland. *Tayside* (r) 10.50 *Roobarb* narrated by Richard Ebers (r) 10.55 *Five to Seven*. Geraldine McEwan with a reading.

11.00 News and weather followed by *Open Air*. Viewers comment on yesterday's television. To contribute ring 051 814 0424.

12.00 News and weather followed by *Daytime Live*. Presented by Alan Titchmarsh and Judi Spiers. Includes another in the occasional *What I Did Again* series that brings absent friends and relatives together. 12.55 Regional news and weather.

1.00 *One O'Clock News* with Michael Buerk. Weather.

1.30 *Neighbours*. Brown and Henry are in for a shock when Aunt Edie arrives home unexpectedly. (Coefax) 1.40 *Going for Gold*. Henry Kelly with another round of the European general knowledge quiz show.

2.15 *Film: The Picture Show Man* (1977) starring Rod Taylor and John McEwan. Set in Australia during the 1920s, the story of Mr Pym, whose vocation as a travelling film movie projector is threatened when a newcomer, an American, arrives on the scene. Based on Lyall Fenn's autobiography and directed by John Power.

3.50 *Comic Relief*. With the voices of Michael Williams, John Wells and Barbara Leigh-Hunt (r) 4.05 *Sanam* (r) 4.10 *Jackanory*. Douglas Hodge with part four of *Nine Bawlers*. 4.25 *New York Bear Stearns*. 4.35 *Disco Heights*. Comedy series set in a seaside hotel. Starring Alan Heap and Mick Wall.

4.55 *Newsround*. 5.05 *Blue Peter*. Introduced by Diane Lousie Jordan, John Leslie and Yvette Fielding. (Coefax)

5.35 *Neighbours* (r). (Coefax) 5.40 *Star O'Clock News* with Andrew Harcourt and Jill Dando. Weather.

6.30 *Newsround*. 6.45 *Jackanory*. 7.00 *Top of the Pops* introduced by Mark Goodier (simultaneous broadcast with Radio 1).

7.30 *EastEnders*. Chirpy is sure that Wilfey is about to let the truth out: two new arrivals in the Square look like causing trouble; there is a dead discovery for Dot; and as Danny prepares to leave for Newcastle, will Michelle have a last minute change of heart? (Coefax)

8.00 *Tomorrow's World*. Peter Macnamara reports from Japan on the latest robot research, which includes robot guide dogs for the blind and the new robot tourist guide. With Judith Hann, Howard Stablesford and Kate Bellingham.

8.30 *Brush Strokes*. The start of a new series about decorator Jacko, who returns from his free-wheeling adventures abroad and finds he is in for a few unwholesome shocks from ex-fiancee, family and friends. Starring Karl Howman, Elizabeth Counsell and Jackie Lyne. (Coefax)

9.00 *News O'Clock News* with Michael Buerk. Regional news and weather.

9.30 *Ben Elton* — the film from Australia. The garrulous Ben Elton continues his stand-up, sit-down observations of life and the universe.

10.00 *Question Time*. Peter Sissons is joined by Sheila McKenna, director of Shellair; Dr Kim Howells, Labour MP for Portlough; David Willetts, director of studies at the Centre for Policy Studies; and the veteran politician Enoch Powell.

11.00 *News O'Clock News* with Michael Buerk. Regional news and weather.

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1.50 *News O'Clock News* with Michael Buerk. Regional news and weather.

2.00 *News O'Clock News* with Michael Buerk. Regional news and weather.

ITV/LONDON

6.00 TV-am begins with News and Good Morning Britain. 6.30 *News* with Richard Keys and, from 7.00, by Mike Morris and Lorraine Kelly. Includes news at 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00 and 8.30.

8.25 *The Pyramid Game*. Quiz show. 8.55 *Thames News* and weather.

10.00 *The Time ... The Place ...* Mike Scott chairs a topical discussion series presented by Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley. Today's edition includes items on family health, problems encountered by the over-60s, soap opera gossip and teaching children to read. With national and international news at 10.55 and regional news at 11.55 followed by national weather.

12.10 *The Riddlers*. For the young. 12.30 *Home and Away*. A new arrival in the shape of John Taggart, Morag's blind assistant; problems abound in Lorne and Morag's friendship; and Morag's housewarming causes a stir in Summer Bay.

1.00 *News at One* with John Suchter. Weather. 1.30 *Thames News* and weather.

1.30 *What You Were Here ...* Includes Shaw Taylor cruising on the Canberra (r). (Oracle) 2.00 *A Country Practice*. Brendan brings a girl suffering from polio to the hospital after she is abandoned by her mother.

3.00 *Win, Lose or Draw*. Game show presented by Danny Baker. 3.30 *Thames News* and weather. 3.50 *Sons and Daughters*. Drama serial. 4.00 *Hot Dog*. 4.15 *Dogland* and the three Musketeers. Animated adventures.

4.40 *Press Gang*. At Last a Dragon. There are more than a few hiccups on the big night of the editor's cocktail party. But the question is, once career-minded Lynda has got over her nerves, and Spike has survived his meeting with Sheikh Nabeel Haliz, will their date be sealed with a kiss? Starring Peter Sallis, Sawalha and Dexter Fletcher. (Oracle)

5.10 *Blockbusters*. Bob Holmes hosts another round of the general knowledge quiz for teenagers.

5.40 *News with Fiona Armstrong*. 6.00 *Home and Away* (r).

6.25 *Thames News* and weather. 6.50 *Thames Help* examines the Community Charge Transitional Relief Scheme. Presented by Jackie Sprackley.

7.00 *Emmerdale*. Alan Turner has an accident and Frank Tate has a battle on his hands when he returns from the past threatens to return with a vengeance.

7.30 *Science Fiction: Little Green Men?* A series of dramatized stories that are stranger than fiction. Tonight, a true tale of discovery behind some strange radio signals from outer space.

8.00 *The Bill*. The Billies. Tosh tries to convince a woman to leave her boyfriend, a burglar's daughter, falling into a life of crime despite Burnside's warning that he is wasting his time. (Oracle)

8.30 *This Week*. The Truth About AIDS. An examination of the evidence behind the AIDS epidemic and a look at the politics of the television campaign about the disease.

9.00 *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. In this last episode of the series, Holmes is asked to close the net he has woven round Professor Moriarty (r). (Oracle)

10.00 *News at Ten* with Sandy Gall and Julia Somerville. Weather. 10.30 *Thames News* and weather.

10.55 *The City Programme* looks at the future of the advertising industry.

11.05 *011 For London*. The truth about the capital's entertainment scene. Followed by *Cinemastoppers*.

11.40 *Prisoner*. Call Block H. Drama set in an Australian women's prison.

12.30 *News at Ten*. In the concluding episode of this mini-series, Hollywood society is shocked by the news of Neil Garg's affair with Gina Germaine, but more startling revelations are in store from a 4.00 News headlines followed by *Three's Company*. Comedy series.

4.30 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

4.55 *News*. 5.00 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

5.00 *News*. 5.05 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

5.10 *News*. 5.15 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

5.20 *News*. 5.25 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

5.30 *News*. 5.35 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

5.40 *News*. 5.45 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

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6.40 *News*. 6.45 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

6.50 *News*. 6.55 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

7.00 *News*. 7.05 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

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8.00 *News*. 8.05 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

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8.30 *News*. 8.35 *ITN Evening News* with Richard Birt. Ends at 6.00.

BBC 2

6.45 *Open University*: Whose Account Counts? Ends at 7.10.

8.00 *News*. 8.15 *Westminster*. 9.00 *Coast*.

9.20 *Daytime on Two*: fuels for generating electricity. 9.40 *Independence for the disabled*. 10.00 *Ashtabasca*. 10.20 *Science challenge*. 10.40 *Young technologists* tackle a problem faced by Brunel 11.00 *Working an arable farm*. 11.20 *Science and sport*. 11.40 *Tutorial topics*. 12.00 *Working in an office*. 12.25 *The Soviet Union's disappearing Aral Sea*. 12.50 *Science for the young*. 1.20 *Fingermouse*. 1.40 *Music time*.

2.00 *News and weather* followed by an animated version of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. 2.15 *Antiques Roadshow* (r). (Coefax)

3.00 *News and weather* followed by *Westminster Live*. 3.50 *News*. Regional news and weather.

4.00 *Great Railway Journeys of the World*. Thomas Thompson journeys across Australia on the 85 Down Madras Mail (r). (Coefax)

5.00 *It Doesn't Have To Hurt* (r). (Coefax) 5.10 *Horizon: The First 14 Days* (r). (Coefax) 5.20 *The Magpie* (1954, b/w) starring Paul Douglas. Easing comedy about a Scottish skipper's attempts to save his small ship from the scrapyard by winning a lucrative cargo. Directed by Alexander Mackendrick. (Coefax)

7.30 *Wide World of Sports*. German-born Syd Jenkins, who lives with her Sambar husband and her 11-year-old child on the plains of northern Kenya, presents her new series. 7.50 *Notes in the Margin*. 1980-85. Citizens. In this last programme Will Hunter, editor of the *European Business Channel*, looks at political and economic citizenship.

9.00 *The Comic Strip Presents ...* Oxford. A tale of sex, spies, scandal and scholarship.

9.30 *40 Minutes*. *Adventures in the Skin Trade*. (Coefax) 9.40 *Small Objects of Desire*. The Deodorant (see Coefax).

10.30 *Newsnight*. 11.15 *The Late Show*. 11.55 *Weather*. 12.00 *Open University*: Weekend Outlook. 12.05 *News*. Development and Learning. Ends at 12.35.

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CHANNEL 4

6.00 *The Channel Four Daily*. 6.30 *News*. 6.55 *Westminster*. 7.00 *Coast*.

9.20 *Daytime on Two*: fuels for generating electricity. 9.40 *Independence for the disabled*. 10.00 *Ashtabasca*. 10.20 *Science challenge*. 10.40 *Young technologists* tackle a problem faced by Brunel 11.00 *Working an arable farm*. 11.20 *Science and sport*. 11.40 *Tutorial topics*. 12.00 *Working in an office*. 12.25 *The Soviet Union's disappearing Aral Sea*. 12.50 *Science for the young*. 1.20 *Fingermouse*. 1.40 *Music time*.

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4.00 *Great Railway Journeys of the*

TEMPUS

Wedding that could end in regrets

Queens Moat Houses and Norfolk Capital do not go together. Shareholders in both could regret it if their stormy courtship is consummated on Monday, when the Queens Moat bid for Norfolk Capital closes.

Mr John Bairstow, Queens Moat chairman, is beginning to display a fondness for issuing new shares. Norfolk Capital is to be paid for by £170 million worth of them, six months after a £141 million Queens Moat rights issue. That came less than a year after a £57 million rights.

That is an awful lot of shares, a fact which will not be lost on Balmoral, Norfolk's biggest shareholder, which has 13 per cent.

For Norfolk Capital's 21,000 shareholders, the regrets are somewhat different. Many will have stayed with the company since the days of Sir Maxwell Joseph. Many of them will find it difficult to accept that Norfolk's story did not end last week with Lady Joseph's resignation.

But in a year's time they might regret accepting Mr Bairstow's offer. By then, the North British Hotel will have repaid after a £20 million, five-star refit. Also by then, the 140,000 office development next to the Caledonian, Norfolk's other five-star Edinburgh hotel, will have been sold for £30 million, while someone will have paid

£18 million for London's Sloane Club. The only serious question mark will be over the St James's club, for which even Mr Bairstow does not appear to have an answer.

Five-star hotels and private clubs are not the stuff of which Queens Moat is made. But it could be the making of Norfolk's board, now united under managing director Peter Eyles, which has the unenviable task of defending against a bid offering an exit multiple of 37 times earnings.

Queens Moat is trying to get assets at a discount and without paying cash for them. Norfolk's shareholders deserve to be rewarded for their patience. They are not being.

Shell

Shell managed to take most people by surprise with the size of its £377 million stock profit, even though British Petroleum had given a lead a week ago.

Throw in an unexpected near-£200 million turnaround on the foreign exchange book between the third and fourth quarters, ensuring a positive contribution from currencies for the year, and the market's underestimation of the final net income figure — up by more than £1 billion at £3,954 million — is fully explained.

More than fully, if anything the operating numbers look



United front: Peter Eyles leads Norfolk board in bid defence

mildly disappointing. The less favourable conditions in the chemical industry are well documented, and a £147 million fourth quarter contribution from this sector, against £228 million last time, was in line with predictions.

On this evidence alone the recent rally in the Shell share price looks to have been overdone. And there is little this year holds which is likely to

challenge that view. Chemicals will find the going stickier still, and may produce a 25 per cent profit shortfall on the near-£1 billion 1989 return.

The higher oil price and a 5 per cent increase in production should ensure a better performance from exploration and production, while refining and marketing should see an improvement in margins — but there will be no repetition of the 1989 stock profit.

County NatWest's Ian Graham looks for £3.56 billion, while Fergus McLeod at BZW reckons £3.46 billion is the best Shell will do. On this range earnings per share fall from the current 44p to about 39p, to leave the shares on a multiple of around 12 — similar to BP.

Given its greater exposure to chemicals and its relative lack of gearing to the oil price, it does not deserve it.

Colonnade

The Stock Exchange has played a curious role in its attempts to secure fair play for shareholders of Stratagem, a tiny investment company in a David and Goliath struggle with two City giants, British & Commonwealth and James Capel. Capel is helping B&C to fight Stratagem's bid for Colonnade Development Capital, an investment trust run by B&C.

The Stock Exchange is worried about a false market in Stratagem's shares after its failure to issue a circular and obtain formal approval from shareholders before committing more than a quarter of its assets when it bought a blocking stake in Colonnade.

However, most of Stratagem's equity is held by board members, and its shareholders do not need protection from their own actions.

If there is a false market in this affair, it is in shares of Intec, soon to take the name Laser-Scan from its main business. This year, Intec's 320 million shares have risen from 2p to 44p, despite the resignations of the chief executive and the finance director. A 16.5 per cent stake in Intec is Colonnade's biggest investment, apart from cash.

Had Intec not been assigned to "penny shares" status, there would have been more fuss. At very least, shareholders would have clamoured for official confirmation of the turnaround in trading results, rumours of which have propelled the shares skywards. Intec is controlled by B&C.

It is significant that the local authority pension funds dominating Colonnade's share register overwhelmingly support Stratagem, not B&C. The Stock Exchange would do well to work out who are really the villains of the piece.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

CRT Group logs on to Software Personnel

CRT Group, the consultancy, recruitment and training business formed after last November's reverse takeover of R Smallshaw (Knitwear), is buying Software Personnel for up to £5.3 million.

The maximum initial payment will be £2.5 million, satisfied by up to £435,000 in cash, £559,000 in loan notes and the balance in new ordinary shares to be allotted at 66p per share. Further consideration of up to £2.79 million may be payable depending on Software Personnel's future profits. Software Personnel is a Birmingham-based recruitment business specializing in the supply of skilled computer consultants, to organizations using IBM or IBM compatible computers, on a contract basis. The company made pre-tax profits of £255,000 in the year to end-March, on sales of £4.4 million.

Ardagh rises to £1.79m

Pre-tax profits at Ardagh, formerly Irish Glass, the Dublin-based glass container maker, rose 41 per cent to £1.93 million (£1.79 million) in the 26-week period ending December 26. Turnover climbed 12 per cent to £16.8 million. Earnings per share rose 48 per cent to 9.02p and the interim is 1.125p, against 1.1p. Net interest receivable jumped from £1135,000 to £1336,000.

Shandwick in £9.75m deal

Shandwick, the public relations firm, is buying fellow consultancy, Paragon Communications, in a deal worth £9.75 million. The offer values each Paragon share at 172½p, and will involve a partial cash alternative of 162½p and a partial loan note alternative. Shandwick has received irrevocable acceptances totalling 52.3 per cent. Paragon shares rose from 128p to settle at 158p.

Lasmo assets for sale

Lasmo, the aggressive British independent exploration and production group, has put a package of assets on the market which could raise as much as £50 million.

It is selling a portfolio of interests in 22 North Sea blocks, including a stake in the Andrey field in the southern sector of the North Sea which is already producing gas. The other blocks have already been explored by Lasmo and in most cases oil has been found. Over the next few weeks, prospective purchasers will be shown the data available on the blocks on offer. Lasmo hopes that the sale could be completed by late spring.

Arncliffe up to £3.14m

Pre-tax profits at the Leeds based residential and commercial developer, Arncliffe Holdings, still grew by 24 per cent to £3.14 million, despite a near four-fold increase in interest charges. Turnover was up by more than 50 per cent at £19.4 million. However, earnings per share rose by only 0.5 pence to 40p a share. A final dividend of 4.0p per share is being recommended, giving a total of 6.75p.

Herrburger in £52,000 loss

Herrburger Brooks, the piano parts supplier, slid into the red with a pre-tax loss of £52,000 in the six months to end-November, compared with a £11,000 profit last time. Turnover was static, at £3.48 million from £3.47 million. There is a 3.02p loss per share, against earnings of 0.58p last time. The company blamed high interest costs. The shares fell by 20p to 22½p on the news.

Uniroyal to buy NTS

Uniroyal Englebert Tyres, a British subsidiary of West Germany's Continental AG, has agreed to buy National Tyre Services (NTS) from Michelin Tyre for £140 million. Michelin Tyre is a unit of Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin, the French tyre group, which acquired NTS from BTR in June 1989.

NTS is a distributor of tyres and auto parts in the United Kingdom. Half the purchase price will be paid by Uniroyal Englebert to Michelin Tyre on completion of the transaction, together with some unspecified additional costs. The rest will be deferred for a fixed period of time. The length of that period was not disclosed. BTR sold NTS to Michelin for £140 million cash.

Eagle Trust sues Savory Milln over rights issue money

By Our City Staff

Eagle Trust, the engineering and film camera group, is suing Savory Milln to recover what it alleges is £13.5 million of the company's money used to underwrite its ill-fated rights issue in December 1987. The lawsuit is the first of a series planned by Eagle's new board, but Swiss Bank Corporation, which owns Savory Milln, said: "We will defend the action as vigorously as we possibly can."

Just before the October 1987 stock market crash, Eagle Trust's former board launched a £21 million rights issue to help pay for the acquisition of Samuelson, the hired film equipment concern.

The issue was underwritten by Savory Milln, but Eagle Trust's former chief executive, Mr John Ferriday, undertook to procure sub-underwriters for £13.5 million of the issue.

Mr Ferriday is now being sought by West Midlands Police.

Eagle's writ claims the repayment of £13.5 million received by Savory Milln in December 1987, which it alleges that Savory Milln, knew, or ought to have known, belonged to Eagle Trust.

Swiss Bank Corporation

agrees that Savory Milln received the money, but says that it came via normal banking channels in satisfaction of sub-underwriting commitments that had been entered into by Mr Ferriday in connection with the rights issue for the Samuelson acquisition.

It said: "We have looked into the circumstances of these payments in detail and we have been advised that there are no grounds for thinking that Savory Milln knew, or should have known, that the payments were in any way connected with the funds allegedly missing from Eagle Trust."

Mr David James, Eagle's current chairman, said that, after receiving counsel's advice, he was confident of the claim's merit.

"We would not undertake litigation unless there is a substantial prospect of recovery for shareholders," Mr James said.

The board had not decided whether to act against any other of Eagle's advisers at this stage, but there would be claims against a "wide range of professional bodies and individuals."

Trade fair invitation rejected

By Colin Narborough

The Department of Trade and Industry has turned down, on cost grounds, the chance to make Britain theme nation at West Germany's most prestigious trade fair, despite the huge UK deficit on bilateral trade.

The organisers of the Hannover Fair had invited Britain to be special guest country in 1992, in the closing stages of the run-up to the single European market.

Though West Germany looks set to become Britain's biggest export market, absorbing £11 billion of UK goods last year, the British appetite for quality products sucked in £20 billion of imports.

A DTI spokesman said the invitation, which could have cost the Government between £2 million and £3 million for the two-week event, was studied closely before it was rejected in 1988 as not being cost-effective.

The DTI normally spends about £500,000 supporting exhibitors at Hannover, an important show place for the Central and Eastern Europe markets.

By comparison, the Government has earmarked £25 million for the British pavilion at the six-month Seville World Expo in 1992.

The DTI spokesman said the Hannover decision was taken after consultation revealed that UK companies also questioned the usefulness of a special British presence.

Improve water quality or face cut in prices, says watchdog

By David Walker

Unless the private water companies offer better water quality and a cleaner environment, water charges to the public will have to be cut, the official water watchdog has said.

Mr Ian Byatt, the director general of the Office of Water Services, told a London conference that he would be watching closely to see that water companies used the revenue from permitted increases in their charges to improve the quality of drinking water.

In co-operation with the Department of the Environment's drinking water inspectorate, Mr Byatt promised the public a real benefit from the higher charges. Money raised by the water companies would have to be spent on reducing sewage outfalls to sea and rivers and repairing water pipes.

"The public will be paying higher bills, rising by 3 per cent above the rate of inflation, to finance this programme so they are entitled to know what the results are. The Office of Water Services will want to ensure that the investment programmes are producing results."

If they were not, Mr Byatt promised to revise the limits on what the water companies can charge when they raise their prices each year.

There was no point in examining whether the water companies laid down bricks or stuck closely to the asset



Looking for an improvement in drinking water: Ian Byatt of the Office of Water Services

management plans they are required by law to show the watchdog. What mattered were qualitative improvements in service to the public.

Mr Byatt, a former Treasury economist, said the water industry was on course to double its capital value during the next 10 years. He said the office did not expect a

"confrontation" with the water companies, as ensuring adequate revenue and protecting the interests of consumers were complementary.

However, Mr Byatt wants to give the office a higher profile by ensuring that the public is notified if water companies fail in their responsibilities. In December the office —

which has no statutory responsibility for water or river quality — was involved in a pollution incident involving the release of chemicals into the Tyne.

Mr Byatt said his job was to make sure the public was notified as soon as possible of such incidents, so compensation could be awarded if necessary.

Jameel ups Hartwell holding

Saudi Arabia's Jameel Group claimed yesterday that it spoke for 30.6 per cent of Hartwell, the motor group, after buying a further 865,833 shares.

Oakhill Ltd, Jameel's vehicle, now owns 9.98 million Hartwell shares and is acting in concert with owners of another 14.24 million.

Oakhill made an increased and final 155p offer for Hartwell last week, valuing the group at £172 million.

In its latest offer document, out yesterday, Oakhill claimed that if Government rules on company's owning stakes in their own pension funds became law, then half of the Hartwell pension fund holding of 10.3 per cent in the company will have to be sold.

The offer closes at 1pm on Monday March 12.

Provident Group rises to £31.7m

By Neil Bennett

Provident Financial Group, the consumer lending and insurance group, lifted pre-tax profits by 12 per cent to £31.7 million in the year to end-December. The final goes up by 1.5p to 13.5p, making a gain of 14 per cent to 20.5p.

Three acquisitions and £50 million of organic growth increased Provident Financial's lending book to £440 million. Personal finance profits rose 19 per cent to £26.8 million.

Provident is the largest door-to-door credit business, and the high costs of its 10,500 sales and collections push the cost of its loans as high as 100 annualized percentage rate.

Mr Peter Hogg, the chief executive, said that bad debt provisions had actually fallen since most of Provident's customers were council ten-

ants and had not been hit by the mortgage rate rises.

He admitted, however, that car repossessions are on the increase at Lynn Regis Finance, the group's motor hire purchase subsidiary.

The insurance division increased profits by 41 per cent to £9.3 million, although the contribution from Colonnade Insurance Brokers, fell by £400,000 to £300,000 due to the disruption of opening 22 branches. This brings the total network to 50, with 20 more openings planned for 1990.

Mentor, the group's software training subsidiary, decreased its losses from £1.2 million to £100,000.

Mr Hogg said gearing was only 160 per cent, and the company is seeking other personal finance or insurance businesses.

Independent miner digs down under for coal interests

Young pays £2.4m for stake in AMI

By David Young

Energy Correspondent

Young Group, the Tyneside independent coal mining group set up by a former British Coal driver, is to pay £2.4 million to buy a 43 per cent stake in Australian Mining Investments.

The purchase of the stake in AMI, the Young Group said, was part of a long-term strategy to acquire coal mining interests outside Britain.

The latest five year contract between British Coal and the two power generating companies to be created after the privatization of the power industry, has effectively closed a large part of the British market to the independent coal mining sector.

The objective, said the company,

was to lessen the group's exposure to the British coal market, which continues to be dominated by British Coal despite Government moves to change legislation which will allow the independent sector to increase the size of its operations.

The total price being paid for the stake in AMI, which will be subject to Australian approval, will be A\$5.5 million (£2.4 million).

The purchase will be financed mainly by a placing of £2 million of Young Group shares. IEP Securities, which already holds 17.7 per cent, has agreed to subscribe for a minimum of £1 million and a maximum of £2 million. The balance will be met from existing resources and borrowings.

AMI is a publicly-quoted company

with an underground and an opencast mine near Gunnedah, New South Wales. The mine produced a million tonnes of coal in the last full year and has estimated reserves of more than 30 million tonnes. The coal is sold to Japanese companies on the basis of term contracts for which prices are negotiated annually.

AMI also owns the Glennies Creek development project near Singleton, New South Wales, which is estimated to have reserves of more than 400 million tonnes of high-quality coking and steaming coal.

An agreement has recently been signed whereby Toyota Menka Kaisha and Nippon Oil Australia will buy a 50 per cent stake in the Glennies Creek project. Development of the

project will depend on further Australian regulatory approval.

AMI has suffered from weak international prices and unfavourable exchange rates. It made an operating loss of A\$3.79 million in the year to June 30, but, on the strength of a return to profitable operations in the second six months, paid a dividend of A\$1.5 cent a share.

The Young Group will make appointments to the board of AMI, and will senior staff, experienced in the operation and development of similar mines in the Britain, will be seconded. It believes that improvements can be made in the operation of the Gunnedah mine and that the company's profitability can be further enhanced.

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Investment plans to benefit as Shell jumps 34% to £3.95bn

By David Young, Energy Correspondent

Shell reported earnings for 1989 at just under £4 billion, a rise of 34 per cent on the previous year and an 8.2 per cent increase in its total dividend for the year to 18.4p. The shares fell 4p to 470p on the news.

Net income for the whole of 1989 was £3.95 billion, compared with £2.94 billion in 1988. In the last quarter earnings rose to £1.01 billion from £702 million in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

On a current cost basis, which removes the effects of stock gains, earnings rose by 13 per cent over the year to £3.57 billion.

Return on capital, which Shell said it regards as the most important indicator, was 13.7 per cent, compared with 11.5 per cent in the previous year.

Apart from chemicals, all Shell divisions announced increased profits for the year: oil exploration and production by 14 per cent, oil refining and marketing 28 per cent, coal 90 per cent and metals 34 per cent. Chemicals were £971 million, down 5 per cent.

Sir Peter Holmes, the Shell chairman, forecast they would remain at about the same levels this year.

Earnings from chemicals dipped a sharp 36 per cent in

the fourth quarter to £147 million from what Shell called the "exceptional" level of the fourth quarter in 1988, reflecting a cyclical downturn in chemical prices.

Sir Peter said chemical prices had now "pretty well levelled off." He said profits from chemicals in 1990 would be "pretty significant, but not £1 billion pounds."

The Shell profits will support a £10 billion investment programme in the current year, Sir Peter said, and he hinted that figures which will be issued when Shell publishes its annual report soon will show that the company continues to find new oil reserves significantly faster than it is producing oil.

Sir Peter said he expects oil prices to stay within their recent limit of \$16 to \$20 per barrel.

He said: "I personally would be surprised to see a further oil price shock. There is always a chance that Opec will go too far, although there's no sign of that at present, in which case oil prices would go below \$16."

Sir Peter also welcomed the new situation in South Africa where Shell has been criticized for its operations. He said: "In

South Africa, we are thoroughly disliked by the right-wing groups.

"Outside South Africa, we are criticized by the anti-apartheid groups. Before long it must be in the West's best interests to help the economy grow in South Africa."

Shell also revealed that it is having talks with the Russian and other East European governments about the possibility of joint ventures in oil exploration and production in Siberia and in marketing in other areas.

The group is already involved in one exploration project in Siberia and it is planning to double the number of Shell service station outlets in Hungary from its existing 40.

Mr John Jennings, group managing director responsible for exploration and production, said the company was also responding positively to signs that Iraq was ready to consider oil companies' help in developing already discovered fields.

He said: "I believe that several of the major Opec resource holders will be tempted to reconsider their stance vis-à-vis the major private oil companies. Taking eastern Europe and Opec together, we may well be entering a new phase."



Profits to stay about the same: Sir Peter Holmes yesterday

COMMENT David Brewerton Not much of a yarn from Courtaulds

Courtaulds' proposals to demerge its textile operations highlight the unattractive histories of both arms of the business. Profits on the chemicals side have been as flat as a pancake for three years on the trot, while the textiles business has actually gone backwards. Edification, maybe, but certainly no delight.

Nothing, moreover, is getting much better. New Courtaulds, which takes in the interests in paint, sealants, packaging and textile fibres, is forecast to make £160 million in the year to March, the same as in 1988-89 and £2 million less than in the year before. Courtaulds Textiles, which includes underwear and yarns, made £40 million before tax in the year to December and, although a back run of pre-tax figures has not been provided, operating profits of £52 million were more than a fifth lower than in 1987-88.

The picture looks even less enticing when allowance is made for the fact that the application of SSAP 24, the accounting standard on pension surpluses, added a whopping £23 million to New Courtaulds' profits and £8 million to Textiles' profits. However, the company argues that the pension refund is only one of several factors which have affected its recent record. It made £800 million-worth of acquisitions and disposals in the late eighties — the sale of its Southern African woodpulp interests

alone depressed profits by £29 million. This was also a period when some of its core businesses suffered serious decline. The cellophane, acrylic fibres and yarn-spinning interests, which made £80 million three years ago, are now trading at little better than break-even.

That latter point brings us back to the demerger. If Courtaulds is saddled with a number of dud businesses, why does it not simply sell them? The answer appears to be that some of them are unsaleable, given the conditions in the European textiles industry. There is also the problem that, were Courtaulds to succeed in selling out, the cash would then make it even more of a target for predators interested in its residual adhesives and paint activities.

Textiles' pro forma dividend of 11.6p would mean a price of 220p for the demerged shares, if investors look for a yield of 7 per cent. As the shares are to be distributed on a one-for-four basis, Courtaulds' existing shares stand to drop by 55p when it goes through. That means the current price of 382p equates to just above 10 times forecast earnings of 31p for the New Courtaulds businesses or nine times the earnings of 35p expected by analysts for 1990-91. Given that New Courtaulds still has some of the dud businesses on board, this suggests that bid possibilities have already begun to enter the market's thinking.

Nice one, Sir Hector

Never one to miss a trick, Sir Hector Laing, chairman of United Biscuits, is laying it on the line for pension fund managers at the National Association of Pension Funds annual conference in Eastbourne this week.

In a provocative contribution to a pamphlet of essays prepared for the conference, he points out that industrial managements expect to see their own pension funds performing well, without considering whether or not that means fund managers operating short term.

"By contrast," he points out, "the same industrial managements expect their institutional shareholders, in essence those same fund managers, to take a long-term view with regard to the company's profit performance."

Not a new idea, of course, but Sir Hector does have some concrete proposals which, while unashamedly weighted in favour of corporate management rather than investors, do bear consideration for inclusion in companies' articles of association. He suggests, for instance, that shareholders should acquire voting rights, and thus the ability to deliver a company into the hands of a hostile bidder, only when they have held the shares for 12 months. This, he believes, would drive out short-term arbitrageurs. So far, so good.

Next on his list for companies' self-

preservation is that any shareholder who fails to vote at a general meeting could be deemed to have voted with the board. But this would be a great triumph for apathy, and make it extremely difficult for investors with a legitimate complaint against the board to get any action. Too cosy, Sir Hector.

He also urges shareholders, by implication institutional shareholders, to make a noise at annual meetings. When institutional investors have dissatisfaction with company managements, they tend either to sell or to put the pressure on behind closed doors. Sir Hector believes they should make their concerns public in the forum of the annual meeting, where management has the responsibility to give an account of its stewardship. A nice idea, but who is going to be the first to stand up?

Finally, he suggests that companies should incorporate into their articles of association a clause that limits the voting rights of any one shareholder so long as earnings per share continue to rise at a defined minimum rate. Now there is an idea which might appeal to institutions — and it is incredibly brave of Sir Hector to suggest it, given the solid rather than exciting earnings per share record of his own United Biscuits. Perhaps he will put it up for consideration at the next UB meeting. Come on Sir H, money where your mouth is.

Former Asda chief to take Argos helm

By Melinda Wittstock

BAT Industries, unbundling itself under continued threat from Sir James Goldsmith's Hoylake bid vehicle, has appointed a former Asda-MFI chairman to head its Argos store chain for its flotation.

Mr David Donne, a former barrister who is non-executive chairman of Steelcity and Crest Nicholson, joins Mr Mike Smith, Argos's chief executive, on March 1 to help carry out the demerger and flotation in late March or early April.

Mr Patrick Sheehy, chairman of BAT, said: "I am delighted that the Argos opportunity has attracted as experienced a chairman as David Donne. His broad skills will complement the specialist retail knowledge of Mike Smith and his team."

Mr Stephen Walls, the former Plessey managing director, was recently hired as

chairman and chief executive of BAT's Appleton and Wiggins Teape paper interests, which will be demerged and floated about a month after Argos.

Analysts expect Argos to have a market capitalization of £600 million.

BAT is to concentrate solely on its financial services and tobacco interests.



David Donne, new chairman

Trencherwood cautious as housing profits slump

By Michael Tate

Housebuilding profits at Trencherwood, the Berkshire-based developer, almost halved last year. After writing off £4 million against its landbank, profits from the homes division, which is still responsible for three quarters of group turnover, slumped from £10.3 million to £1.7 million. However, more than doubled profits from office and industrial activities, at £5.6 million, have enabled the group to limit the fall in group pre-tax profits to £4 million at £8.7 million. A 3.63p share dividend maintains the total at 5.13p for the year to November 30. Earnings were 23.12p.

Describing 1989 conditions as the "worst housing market since 1974," Mr Brian Eigheten, Trencherwood managing director, blamed the abolition of double mortgage relief in August 1988 for the start of

the slide in housing prices, which accelerated rapidly as interest rates rose.

Trencherwood, which was expanding westward and northward into the Midlands when interest rates began to spiral, has closed down its southern region offices and merged its sites with the central region. It has also cut back on staff, producing savings of £600,000 a year.

Mr Eigheten reports that the group sold only 401 homes during the year, against 529 in the previous year and an original budget of 675. The retirement sector was particularly badly hit.

Gross margins came under pressure due to the drop in sales prices together with increased building costs. "We may be building fewer units, but the site times are longer in a weak market," he said. Gearing crept up from 50.5

per cent to 61 per cent by the year-end, but the cost of the debt has been restrained by the use of interest rate caps and the group's facility to borrow longer-term money at fixed rates.

The group interest charge is £4.39 million against £1.1 million. Mr Eigheten predicted that gearing would be down to "around 45 per cent" by the end of the year.

He warned that the short-term prospect for housing was still one of "caution and uncertainty." Reservations and activity during the first six weeks of 1990 had been "encouraging" but it would be some time before confidence returned to the market.

"In the light of the recent rise in mortgage rates it is unlikely we will exceed last year's housing profit," he said. The shares dipped 15p to 155p on the USM.

Texas sows seeds with Gardenstore

By Melinda Wittstock

Texas Homecare, the DIY retailing subsidiary of Mr Cyril Stein's Ladbroke Group, has linked up with the fast-growing Gardenstore chain to boost its share of the £2 billion British gardening market.

Gardenstore, which operates 12 outlets covering 2 million sq ft of retail space and is now developing another 11, will be incorporated into an initial 12 of the 215 Texas Homecare superstores.

The first Gardenstore will start trading, under the exclu-

sive agreement, in time for Easter, with the remaining 11 to open before the year-end. If the venture is successful, Gardenstore will open up in all the other Texas stores.

Mr Ron Trenter, the deputy chairman and managing director of Texas Homecare, said: "Over 150 Texas stores already include a garden centre. By combining with the specialist brand leader, our objective is to rapidly establish market leadership in the gardening sector."

Bound by contract not to reveal the financial structure

or terms of the deal, Mr Trenter simply said it would be beneficial for both parties.

It is believed that the venture will substantially increase the profitability of Texas Homecare's garden side, and establish it firmly as the leader in the gardening market.

"It's a very nice deal for both of us," said Mr Malcolm Parkinson, the former Woolworth chief executive and B&Q founder who set up Gardenstore close to a year ago.

He said the deal will not slow down Gardenstore's

plans to open more stand-alone outlets, of which he hopes to have 30 by the year-end.

Gardenstore is a subsidiary of Retail Corporation, the private company set up by Mr Parkinson and two former B&Q colleagues, Mr John Kennedy and Mr Alan Green. In less than a year Gardenstore has become one of the largest specialist gardening retailers in Britain, with a turnover of about £25 million.

Mr Parkinson said he plans to float Retail Corporation by 1991 or 1992 at the latest.

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Drexel coup for County

Priding itself for being the early bird that catches the worm, County NatWest WoodMac has picked up two of the most senior executives from the debris of the collapsed Drexel Burnham Lambert empire in the US. After signing on the dotted line last night, Arthur Kirsch, until recently head of the entire equities division at DBL, now becomes president and chief executive of County NatWest Securities Inc, County's American arm. And his colleague John Kellenyi, formerly head of research at Drexel — and rated the number one utilities analyst in the US — is also joining the firm, again as head of research. Tim Ferguson, chief executive of County NatWest has been in New York since Saturday to handle the negotiations personally and he is now in talks with "a number of their lieutenants." "We are talking to their key people in the US and then perhaps their salesmen in Europe, which could mean a total of 40 or 50 professionals," says Scott Dobbie, vice chairman of County NatWest Securities. "With appropriate support staff we could be talking about 100 people in total." He described it as a "unique opportunity to make a quantum leap in the US."

Sinking feeling
Michael Hington, chief executive of Paragon Communications, who has just agreed a

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Reid between the lines

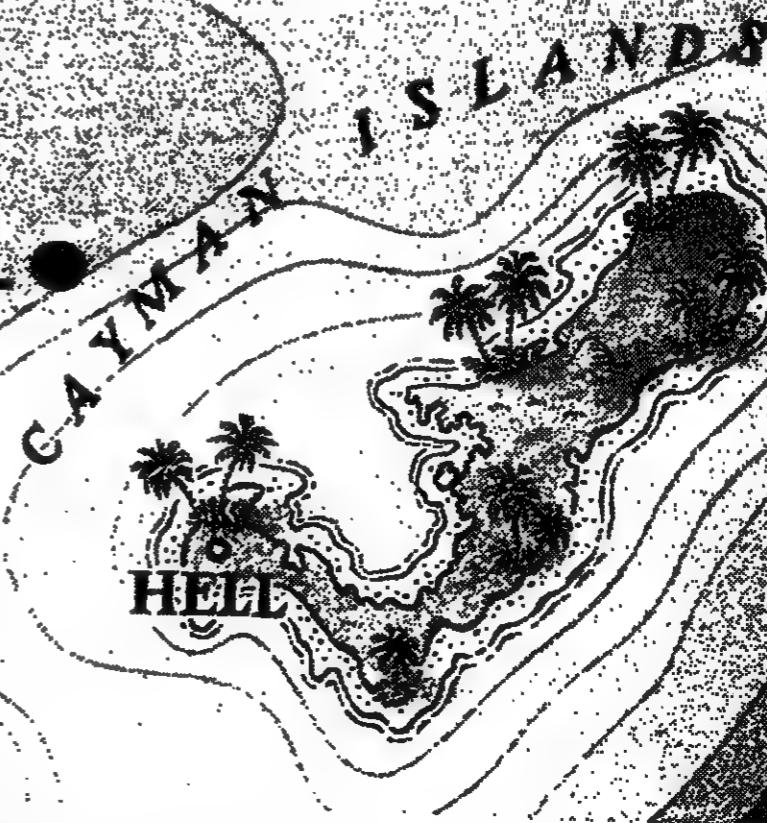
A clash of the titans that was clearly never to be — John Ashcroft, battered head of the equally battered Coloroll Group, was to have addressed his tormentors, in the form of the National Association of Pension Funds, at their annual conference in Eastbourne today. But Ashcroft, never previously one to shy away from such public engagements, has apparently backed off from offering what would certainly have been a combative view of

markets and investors. According to the advance billings, he was due to speak about "Why do some companies become disenchanted with a public quotation?" But delegates will be disappointed to learn that he cancelled the engagement two weeks ago. Acting as his understudy, and putting "The Case for Property" will be Iain Reid, from the estate agency group Richard Ellis. A man with time on his hands...

one of his employees, Julia Barker, just before Christmas, was last night able to reflect on the £2.35 million he's now worth. "I've extended my service contract to three years, and I've agreed to keep at least 50 per cent of my shares in Shandwick," he says. "But I don't know what I'm going to do with the rest yet. I've already bought the matrimonial home in Roehampton, I've got a second in Barnes which I can't sell, and I've no plans to buy anything else." He did let slip, however, that some of his new found wealth might fund a long overdue honeymoon. Earlier plans for a trip to the South Sea Islands had to be cancelled when one of his major clients, Kingfisher, launched its bid for Dixons.

Carol Leonard

If you don't enjoy your first trip on Upper Class, then you can go to Hell.



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Receiver called in at Memory offshoots

By Colin Campbell

Mr Aidan McKenna, chairman of the troubled Irish computer company, Memory Computers, has resigned and 11 subsidiaries have been placed in receivership.

Memory's shares were suspended last December at 17.5p each since when there have been talks concerning a possible management buyout.

However in February the buyout talks were aborted, and yesterday Memory Computer said that Mr Bernard Somers of Somers & Associates had been appointed receiver of 11 subsidiary companies. Memory Computer Plc itself was not placed in receivership.

Mr McKenna took over as chairman last December following the departure of Mr Frank Casey, the previous chairman.

Memory Computers has had a chequered history on the Stock Exchange since it received a quotation on the unlisted securities market back in December 1982.

In September 1984 the group pulled out of a proposed £2 million (£857,000) share placing and then in December of that year proposed a £3.4 million share placing.

In 1985 the company reported losses.

Doctor's care sees £127,000 at half-time after only £52,000 for all of previous year

Havelock ill's respond to treatment

By Melinda Wittstock

Mr Lewis Robertson, the company doctor hired last May to nurse Havelock Europa back to good health, believes an encouraging set of interim results yesterday from the Scottish store design and shop-fitting group show that his medicine is finally paying off.

Havelock, whose institutional investors brought in Mr Robertson as chairman after a collapse in its share price and profits, reported pre-tax profits of £127,000 for the six months to October 20, compared with just £52,000 for the whole of the previous year.

Although Havelock reported an interim £1.39 million profit last time, it was followed by a quick plunge into losses of £1.34 million in the second half. Interim earnings per share are 0.5p (6.5p).

Mr Robertson, whose other rescues include Lilley, Triplex Lloyd and Borthwicks, said Havelock was now well on its way to a "strong recovery" after a restructuring programme encompassing management changes, tighter reporting and control systems, and several disposals.

"It was a textbook case really. We inherited three good shopfitting units, but they were encumbered by poor administration, lack of direction and a number of poorly-judged acquisitions

which were losing money and costing management time," said Mr Robertson.

The disposals have resulted in a £60,000 exceptional charge and an £80,000 extraordinary item for some redundancies and reorganization costs.

There is no interim dividend payout for loyal Havelock shareholders, who received an interim 2.6p last time, but Mr Robertson and Mr Hew Balfour, the new chief executive, hope to pay a final dividend when results for the last eight months of 1989 are reported in April. The company has changed its year-end to December.

Havelock, Britain's biggest shopfitter whose customers include Boots, Marks and Spencer and many other major retailers, said order books have never been stronger. Most of the work is taking place on new out-of-town retailing developments.

Mr Balfour said the company would offset the seasonality of retail shopfitting by expanding its activities into the hospital, laboratory and banking sector.

Its shares, down 5p to 127p yesterday having plunged from a 1987 high of 370p, have to reach 250p before Mr Robertson receives a performance bonus of £200,000.



Hoping to pay a final dividend to loyal shareholders: Hew Balfour, the new chief executive of Havelock Europa, yesterday

Steel float secures watchdog backing

By Sheila Gunn
Political Reporter

The Government has won praise from the National Audit Office, the independent public spending watchdog, for its handling of the British Steel privatization in the wake of the 1987 Stock Market crash.

The National Audit Office backed the decision to offer two billion shares, at the relatively low price of 125p, and press ahead with the £2.4 billion sale in November, 1988, in spite of advice to delay it for three months because of uncertain market conditions.

"On the final objective of relinquishing all government financial obligations, the successful flotation of British Steel has achieved this objective," it concluded.

The net cost of the sale, probably the lowest of any of the Government's privatizations, totalled £45.5 million against net proceeds of £2.4 billion.

Free, matching and discount shares offered to employees and pensioners in the company reduced receipts by £17.8 million.

● National Audit Office report on Department of Trade and Industry: Sale of Government Shareholding in British Steel plc, Stationery Office, £4.20

Aeroflot offers perks in war on Western rivals

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Aeroflot, the Russian state airline, is to offer passengers a range of "Perestroika Perks" in an effort to prevent Western airlines dominating the booming demand for flights to Eastern Europe.

Soviet officials were shocked at the results of their first detailed market survey of passengers, which revealed that the airline had a poor reputation for efficiency, service and safety, and that their 10 per cent share of the Russian/American market was dwindling still further.

Now air travel between East and West is set to expand dramatically with massive demand from holidaymakers to see European cities which, until now, have been virtually sealed off from Western visitors. Aeroflot is determined to cash in on the boom.

Mr David Colman, vice-president of America's United Airlines, told a conference of airline executives and aviation authorities in Paris this week that the new marketing drive by Aeroflot was already showing results. "All these problems are now accepted by the airline's management and they are doing something about it," he said.

In 1989 a \$1 million advertising campaign was launched to change travel agents' perception. All sorts of Perestroika Perks have been introduced for high-yield passengers such as free hotel nights, Mont Blanc pens, chauffeur cars to hotels and free side trips to cities like Kiev and Leningrad. This is a

remarkable shift of public posture and shows so clearly how the thinking in the commercial departments of these carriers is now so similar to that in the West and, perhaps more importantly, the thinkers and innovators can now put into effect their ideas.

Mr Vladimir Samoroukov, director-general commercial of Aeroflot, said: "We are trying very hard to improve our image. We will be using our new Airbus on the Atlantic. Aeroflot has really stepped on the path of integration into a common system of world air transport."

The two-day conference, organized by *Airline Business* magazine, heard how the travel potential to the East could be almost unlimited and that Western aircraft manufacturers could win orders worth up to \$18 billion as airlines in the East replaced ageing, noisy Russian fleets with modern Western aircraft.

Leading the drive to open up Eastern Europe to tourists are the Japanese.

The Japanese government has set a target of 10 million foreign trips a year to be made by their nationals by 1992 in an effort to reduce the balance of trade deficit. Growth in demand has been so great, however, that this will easily be surpassed this year.

Although the top three destinations remain Hawaii, Western Europe and Hong Kong, airlines report massive interest in towns and cities in the Eastern bloc.

Higher value goods lift Taveners 35%

By Philip Pangalos

A move to higher value products helped Taveners, the Liverpool confectionery group, improve pre-tax profits by 35 per cent to £287,000 in the year to end-December.

Group turnover was virtually unchanged at £10.6 million, despite a 7 per cent fall in British sales, which were affected by the long hot summer, and a 10 per cent reduction in exports due to the concentration on higher value products. Earnings per share rose by 36 per cent to 9.41p and the final dividend is 1.50p

(1.25p). The company said the acquisition of the 29.3 per cent shareholding from AG Barr, the Glasgow soft drinks company, by Karl Fazer, the Finnish food group, had led to co-operation agreements in selling, distribution and research and development.

There was an extraordinary loss of £66,000 relating to the costs of closing the Glasgow factory, although there was better productivity from the marshmallow production line at the newly-equipped Liverpool plant.

When the going gets tough...

Family Money on Saturday looks at the new round of mortgage rate rises, and reviews some of the best deals for savers with cash to spare. There is also help for property owners looking for new

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ways to sell their home, and advice on choosing the best personal pension.

With new Business Expansion Schemes appearing by the day, Family Money looks at some of the deals on offer.

TEES/SIDE

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A recent national survey of the quality of life in 38 of Britain's urban areas ranked Teesside ninth. London was 34th. What placed Teesside so high? Chiefly, reasonable cost of living, high quality reasonably priced housing, good shopping and leisure facilities, and excellent access to fine scenery. But Teesside scored right across the lifestyle spectrum - particularly when compared with the South East. Teesside's weekly shopping basket is the sixth cheapest in the land. Teesside's nursery school provision is twice the national average, its 'O' Level attainment above the national figure with excellent choice of State and private schools, the further education facilities

within its reach extensive and wide ranging. Public expenditure on health is higher; hospital waiting lists shorter. And the magnificent scenery? The 36 miles of the Cleveland and North Yorkshire Heritage Coast, the 550 square miles of the the North York Moors National Park, the 680 square miles of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the upper reaches of the River Tees with its spectacular waterfalls. Teesside - the sum of its parts puts it in the Top Ten. To find out more contact Duncan Hall, Chief Executive, Teesside Development Corporation, Tees House, Riverside Park, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS2 1RE. Tel 0642 230636. Fax 0642 230843.



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Notice is hereby given that a balance of the Register will be struck on Monday, 5th March, 1990 for the preparation of the half-yearly dividend payable on the FIRST PREFERENCE SHARES for the six months ending 31st March, 1990. The dividend will be paid on 2nd April, 1990.

For Transferees to receive this dividend, their transfers must be lodged with the Company's Registrar, Lloyds Bank Plc, Registrar's Department, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 6DA, not later than 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 5th March, 1990.

Shell Centre By Order of the Board
London, V.A. WADHAM
SE1 7NA Company Secretary
22nd February, 1990

News Corp plans \$1bn satellite venture for US

By Stephen Leather

Four media companies have announced a new \$1 billion satellite broadcasting service for the United States.

The News Corporation, NBC, Cablevision Systems Corporation and Hughes Communications are to launch Sky Cable in late 1993. The high-power satellite system will beam signals for the latest High Definition Television (HDTV) systems and digital quality audio to "napkin-sized" satellite dishes that will cost about \$300.

"We have great confidence in the proposed Hughes technology which should break new ground for future entertainment and information transmission standards," said Mr Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of News International, which owns The Times.

He added: "At The News Corporation we have been busy launching, selling and delivering a new programming service in the United Kingdom. That service, Sky Television, utilizes direct broadcast satellite technology and a unique video encryption service. We expect to apply our experience to the development of Sky Cable."

Sky Cable will have up to

108 channels available and will be the first direct broadcast satellite in the US.

The service will be beamed to American homes from the most powerful space transmitter ever launched for commercial communications, provided by Hughes Communications. Sky Cable will be the first system to offer HDTV to the US on a broad consumer scale. Viewers will be offered a variety of services, including multi-channel packages, subscription channels and pay-per-view programmes.

"Sky Cable is a major step forward into the 21st century for US TV viewers," said Mr Stephen Petrucci, president and chief executive of Hughes Communications. "For the first time, rural Americans will be afforded the opportunity to enjoy truly broadcast cable services like those available by cable in urban communities."

"The new service will give Americans a taste of the next century's boundless range of video choices, sharply enhanced picture reception and more realistic sound," he said.

The companies announced last night that the new service will require a total investment of about \$1 billion, with up to one third in equity and \$325

million of non-recourse debt.

The equity will be divided equally among the four partners and will be paid into the venture in equal amounts over the next four years. The remaining capital will be used as working capital.

Mr Charles F. Dolan, chairman and chief executive of Cablevision Systems Corporation said Sky Cable "will bring Americans a wonderfully diverse means of new programmes, catered to individual tastes." He added: "It will speed the arrival of advanced technologies such as HDTV and digital sound."

"Sky Cable will also afford viewers in areas not served by cable — many of whom don't have the space or funds for old-fashioned satellite dishes — a less cumbersome and far more economical way to access an exciting new array of programmes."

NBC is America's leading television network and owns television stations in seven cities.

Cablevision and NBC have extensive interests in cable programming, jointly owning the Consumer News and Business Channel, Bravo, Sports Channel America, News 12-Long Island, and 10 regional sports channels.

Whisky distillers taste a bitter tax

By Derek Harris, Industrial Editor



Waiting to taste a change in the tax which hits Scottish distillers: Sandy Grant Gordon

Mr Sandy Grant Gordon, chairman and managing director, of William Grant & Sons whose brands include Britain's best selling malt whisky Glenfiddich, will be one of the keenest watchers of the first Budget of Mr John Major.

Mr Gordon, a member of what is now claimed to be the oldest whisky family still in the business and stretching back to 1857, is in the van of the Scotch whisky distillers who, through the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), are asking the Chancellor to mitigate the effects of "unfairly high" tax bills.

Corporation tax bears hard on the distillers because of the maturation period needed for whisky. The longer the period the heavier the tax tends to be. This means the worst hit distillers are mostly those making malt whiskies which are often kept for 10 years or more to bring them that much nearer to perfection.

By law, whisky distillers must mature their spirits for at least three years although the average is about five. As a partial offset to the higher bills the SWA is asking the Chancellor for a three-year maturation allowance in line with the legal minimum.

The whisky distillers have faced bigger tax bills ever since stock relief was phased out in Mr Nigel Lawson's first Budget. The manufacturing cost of the whisky is struck when it is distilled plus the warehousing cost. The more inflation there is during the period whisky is maturing the higher the tax.

Mr Gordon said: "Corporation Tax is paid at 35 per cent

but with the inflation factor we are paying the equivalent of about 70 per cent. It has been the equivalent of 100 per cent in some years."

He added: "This is extremely painful. What William Grant is paying is equal to our whole interest bill." Were stock relief still operating the tax bill would be about half what it is, he estimates.

He and the other distillers believe it is particularly unfair because virtually no other business activity suffers so much from the problem of necessarily long-period stocks. Aircraft spares specialists are one of the few in carrying key high value items like spare engines.

The bottled malts of Macallan Glenlivet, distillers of The Macallan, are mostly between 10 and 12 years old but some are as much as 25 years old. Mr William Phillips, managing director there, said its tax bills were still reasonable because the tailend of stock relief was still being felt but shortly it was expecting to be paying the equivalent of a 70 per cent or more Corporation Tax rate.

The malt distillers feel that what adds weight to their case is that they are providing jobs in remote areas as distilleries are often located in the highlands and islands of Scotland.

It is also argued that in countries with competitor products — notably France with its cognac and the United States with its bourbon — the distillers have an option to be taxed on a current accounting basis which takes account of inflation.

Minorco back on acquisition trail in \$705m deal for US gold miner

By Colin Campbell, Mining Correspondent

The \$2.5 billion cash-rich Minorco group is to take over Freeport-McMoRan Gold, the US gold mining company for \$705 million — equivalent to \$17 a share — in the first of what could be a series of international deals.

Minorco said it has reviewed a number of acquisition opportunities in the US and abroad, and concluded Freeport-McMoRan Gold was "attractive".

The cash price represents a 21 per cent premium to market price and almost 55 times historic earnings, and is Minorco's first significant deal since bowing out of the bid battle for Consolidated Gold Fields last year.

Minorco is acquiring a 61 per cent stake from Freeport-McMoRan Inc, the parent

company, and will make a tender offer for the balance of the gold arm.

Analysts have waited a long time for Minorco to move on the acquisition front and fulfil its 1988 promise of expanding along the natural resources trail.

Mr Roger Phillimore, Minorco's commercial director, said from New York yesterday that Minorco had not been under any pressure to spend its cash and that the Freeport deal confirmed it was moving away from being a passive investor and becoming an operator.

Even after the Freeport deal, Minorco will have cash holdings of about \$1.8 billion. Freeport brings Minorco attributable proven and probable reserves of 2.22 million

ounces of gold. More financial details follow next week with the tender offer document.

Meanwhile, Minorco's first formal fight on the acquisition trail has floundered speculation about its next move. Although the latest deal by Minorco is gold-related, the group is determined to expand within the widest possible field of natural resources.

It was an earlier market suggestion that Minorco had been thinking about bidding for BP Coal, which had put up for sale various US and European coal interests.

But in view of more recent developments concerning Peabody, the largest US coal producer, it is a further investment thought that Minorco could feature on the coal front. Hanson, which has a 49 per

cent shareholding in Newmont Mining, has bought out three minority stakes in Peabody and may, in time, be a buyer of the controlling Peabody stake which is held by Newmont.

If Hanson is true to form and packages up investments only to sell them on, then Hanson might in time be a seller of all of Peabody — to Minorco.

An asset sale by Hanson to Minorco would complete the investment circle.

It was the sale by Minorco of its stake in ConsGold to Hanson that finally delivered all of ConsGold into Hanson's lap in 1989.

Minorco, which has an estimated net worth of about \$20 a share, yesterday traded at \$17.15, down 61 cents.

Ricardo and SAC in £23m merger

By Melinda Wittstock

Ricardo Group, the Essex-based engine and transmission designer that escaped the clutches of First Technology last year, has set up shop with SAC International, the engineering design group, in a £23.5 million agreed merger intended to build critical mass in an increasingly competitive industry.

In an all-share deal leaving SAC shareholders with 53.4 per cent of the combined group, Ricardo is offering 82 of its own shares for every 100 held in SAC, valuing SAC's shares at 115p, based on the 140p price of Ricardo's shares.

Ricardo has already received irrevocable acceptance from all the directors and founding investors of SAC, as well as from two institutions, representing about 46 per cent of SAC's equity. Framlington Group has also agreed to accept the offer.

The enlarged group, which will have a market capitalization of £44 million and turnover of £60.3 million, will become one of Britain's leading independent mechanical design consultancies, benefiting from geographic as well as operational synergies worldwide.

Mr Roger Smedley, the chairman and chief executive of SAC, who becomes chairman of SAC-Ricardo, said the merger would not cause any redundancies or closures.

SAC-Ricardo would concentrate on expanding into vehicle body design and gas turbine power generation, while looking to acquire engineering software companies.

The merged company said that it would take advantage of "the enormous potential of the Far East".

Mr Doug Taylor, Ricardo's chairman and chief executive, is managing director of the enlarged group.

The merger was announced as Ricardo reported a 34 per cent rise in interim pre-tax profits to £1.49 million, with earnings per share up 32 per cent to 7.25p.

Accepting SAC shareholders will not receive Ricardo's interim dividend of 1.5p, but SAC will pay its shareholders a 1.6p dividend for the year to end-August.

BCE falls to £1.16m loss amid snooker recession

By Philip Pangalos



Fisher: snooker market fell £6.06 million to £4.98 million, with British accessory sales down by about 30 per cent

The fortunes of BCE Holdings, the Unilever Securities Market snooker and pool table and accessories group, have continued to worsen, with the company turning in a pre-tax loss of £1.16 million in the six months to end-September, against a £93,000 profit last time.

BCE will not pay an interim dividend, which was 0.4p last time. It omitted a final dividend last summer after slipping into the red.

There is a 4.16p loss per share, compared with 0.18p earnings previously.

The deep recession in the snooker market and the worldwide downturn in demand for accessories, which account for more than half of the company's annual sales, led to a fall in turnover from

throughout the world had continued to decline in the last six months and was still far from buoyant.

BCE's problems were compounded by continued pressure on margins and higher interest rates, with interest costs rising by 80 per cent to £590,000.

In addition, subsidiaries in Belgium, which have now been closed, lost about £200,000, and a Canadian snooker hall lost between £300,000 and £400,000.

Mr George Withy, finance director, said that his company was trying to contract and that staffing had been halved in the last six months.

However, there is likely to be a substantial loss for the full year despite the restructuring. The shares lost 1p to 16p.

Butler Cox acquires CITI

By Our Industrial Editor

Butler Cox, the information technology group floated last year, is acquiring Cranfield Institute of Technology Information Technology Institute (CITI) for up to a maximum £900,000 at the end of two years depending on profit levels.

CITI was created in 1986 by marrying academics linked to Cranfield Institute of Technology and specialists with an industrial background associated with a number of sponsoring industrial companies.

One of the CITI specialities which Butler Cox expects to develop is bespoke education programmes for industrial companies. There is a substan-

tial CITI client list, including British Telecom, Jaguar, Holland's DAF and Fokker, Abbey National and ICL.

The four sponsors of CITI — British Telecom, British Petroleum, British Gas and BICC — last year considered it might be better for CITI to become part of a wider organization as it was neither wholly belonging to the Cranfield Institute nor standing alone as a commercial concern.

This led to an approach to Butler Cox last November. There is an initial payment of £75,000 for the assets being acquired, the intention being for CITI to retain its base at

Milton Keynes which is within easy travelling distance of the institute. Principal and managing director of CITI is Dr Allan Fox.

Mr George Cox, managing director of Butler Cox, said: "CITI will extend our range and strong links will be retained with Cranfield university. Both the university and the industrial sponsors are keen to see the CITI concept developed further."

An advisory board for CITI will be headed by Professor Frank Hartley, Cranfield's vice chancellor. Courses that will rank for university qualification will be on offer.

Yorkshire Chemicals at £9.6m

By Jeremy Andrews

Trading conditions at Yorkshire Chemicals, the manufacturer of textile dyes and tanning chemicals based in Leeds, became more favourable as 1989 progressed and profits rose by 13 per cent to £9.6 million before tax in the year to December on sales 19 per cent up at £70 million.

Mr Philip Lowe, chairman, said profits would have been "considerably greater" but for a 14-week overtime ban which disrupted the first half. The

exhaustion of earlier tax losses led to a 7 point jump in the tax charge to 30 per cent and this, and a slight increase in issued capital, led to a 1 per cent decline in earnings per share to 36.3p.

Mr Lowe said future levels of corporate tax were unlikely to restrict growth in earnings to the same extent as in 1989.

A 1.5p increase in the final dividend to 8.5p, leaves the total distribution a fifth higher at 12p. Mr Lowe said the

immediate outlook was good. Foreign exchange cover was in place at more favourable rates than in 1989 and the revised employment contracts should facilitate the resumption of strong productivity growth.

Outlay on capital investment and acquisitions rose to £7.2 million from £6.5 million in 1978. This was again financed from trading cash flow and net borrowings at the year end were less than a tenth of shareholders funds.

Largest Japanese insurer joins rush to take maximum stake

The sun rises over HK Bank

From Lala Ys, Hong Kong

Nippon Life Insurance of Japan, the world's largest life insurance company, has become a significant 1 per cent shareholder in the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

The company, which accounts for about 3 per cent of Tokyo's stock market capitalization, is the third Japanese insurance company to buy the maximum permissible 1 per cent shareholding in Hongkong Bank.

Dai-ichi Mutual Life and Meiji Mutual Life, respectively the second and fourth largest insurance companies in Japan, have each bought a similar stake within the last 11 months, underscoring the bank's attractiveness as an investment target for cash-rich Japanese institutions.

The 1 per cent stake, in the region of 52 million shares, costs a little over 6 billion

yen (£24.2 million) at current share prices.

Mr George Cardona, the bank's spokesman, said it welcomed the acquisition. "We like to have such a large company as our shareholder. It demonstrates their confidence in us."

Under Hongkong Bank rules investors are not allowed to own more than 1 per cent of the shares without board approval, and no one is known to have a holding beyond that limit.

Nippon Life bought its shares through the Hong Kong stock market, but the price of the investment and the period over which the purchase took place has not been made public.

Nippon Life, which set up a representative office in Hong Kong last year, is one of a fast-growing group of Japanese investors and fund managers in the colony. At least seven others — all of them Tokyo's largest life insurance

companies — have established branches or joint venture subsidiaries here in the past three years.

Most of them supply their parent groups with financial information on south-east Asia. Some place orders for their parents in Tokyo, manage portfolios for clients in the colony, and make private placements for Hong Kong and international companies. They do not conduct any insurance business in the colony.

"Japanese companies are all trying to intensify investment in Hong Kong and increase their exposure to south-east Asian equity," said Mr Haruyuki Kanda, executive vice-president of Nomura International (HK), the colony's largest Japanese broking and research company.

"This is a region of the fastest growth compared with Europe and the US," he said.

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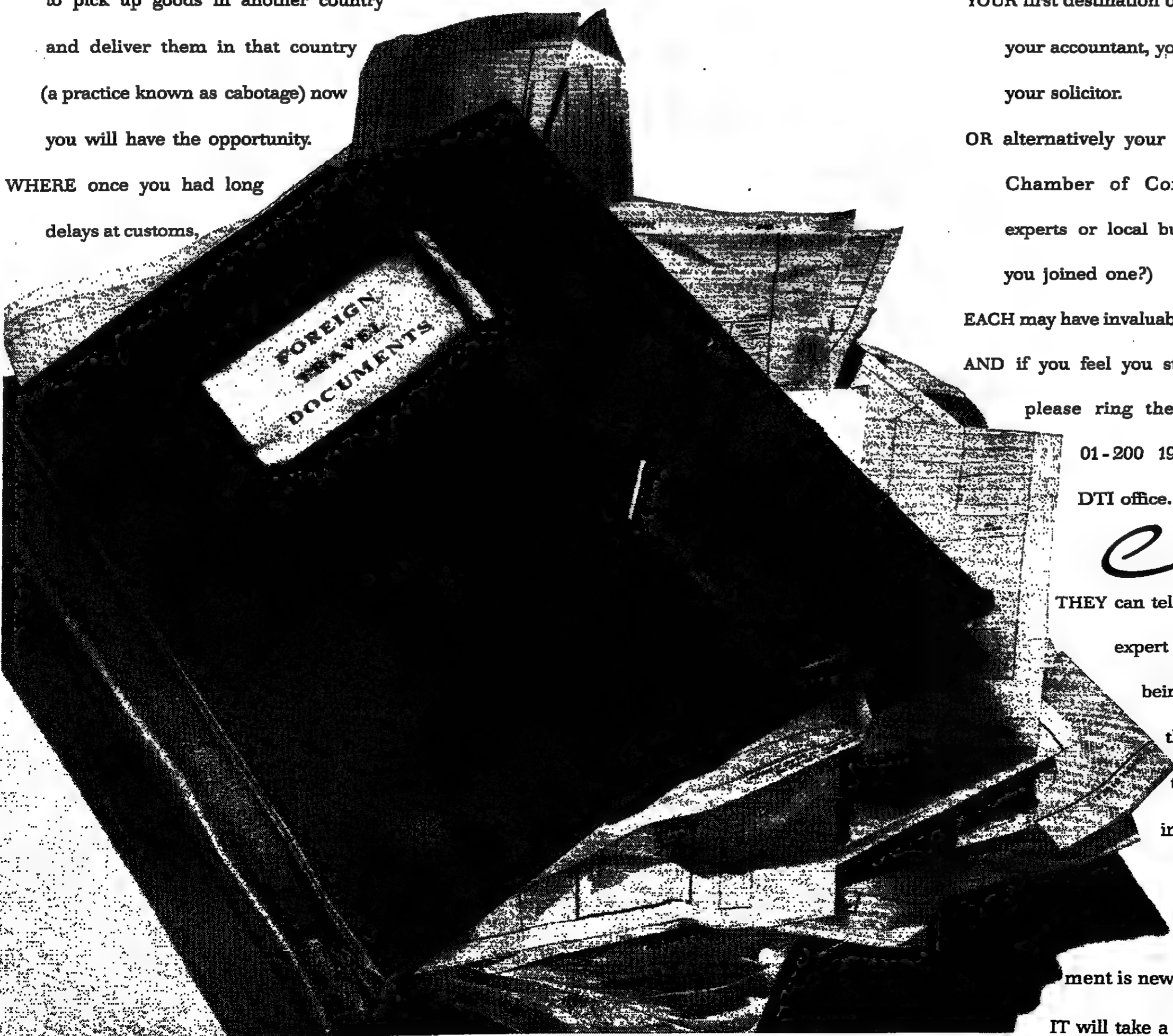
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No.	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	AS Elec	Electricals	
2	Wintner	Bank, Discount	
3	Mackay (High)	Property	
4	Bank of India	Finance	
5	Crystalline	Electricals	
6	Industries Ltd (a)	Industrials S-Z	
7	Industrials Ltd (a)	Industrials E-K	
8	Chambers (a)	Electricals	
9	Carroll	Industrials E-K	
10	STC (a)	Electricals	
11	Industrials Ltd (a)	Industrials E-K	
12	Industrials Ltd (a)	Industrials E-K	
13	Industrials Ltd (a)	Industrials E-K	
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118.90	118.80	100	118.85	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.80	118.70	100	118.75	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.70	118.60	100	118.65	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.60	118.50	100	118.55	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.50	118.40	100	118.45	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.40	118.30	100	118.35	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.30	118.20	100	118.25	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.20	118.10	100	118.15	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.10	118.00	100	118.05	+0.10	0.84	12.5
118.00	117.90	100	117.95	+0.10	0.84	12.5
117.90	117.80	100	117.85	+0.10	0.84	12.5
117.80	117.70	100	117.75	+0.10	0.84	12.5
117.70	117.60	100	117.65	+0.10	0.84	12.5
117.60	117.50	100	117.55	+0.10	0.84	12.5
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111.70	111.60	100	111.65	+0.10	0.84	12.5
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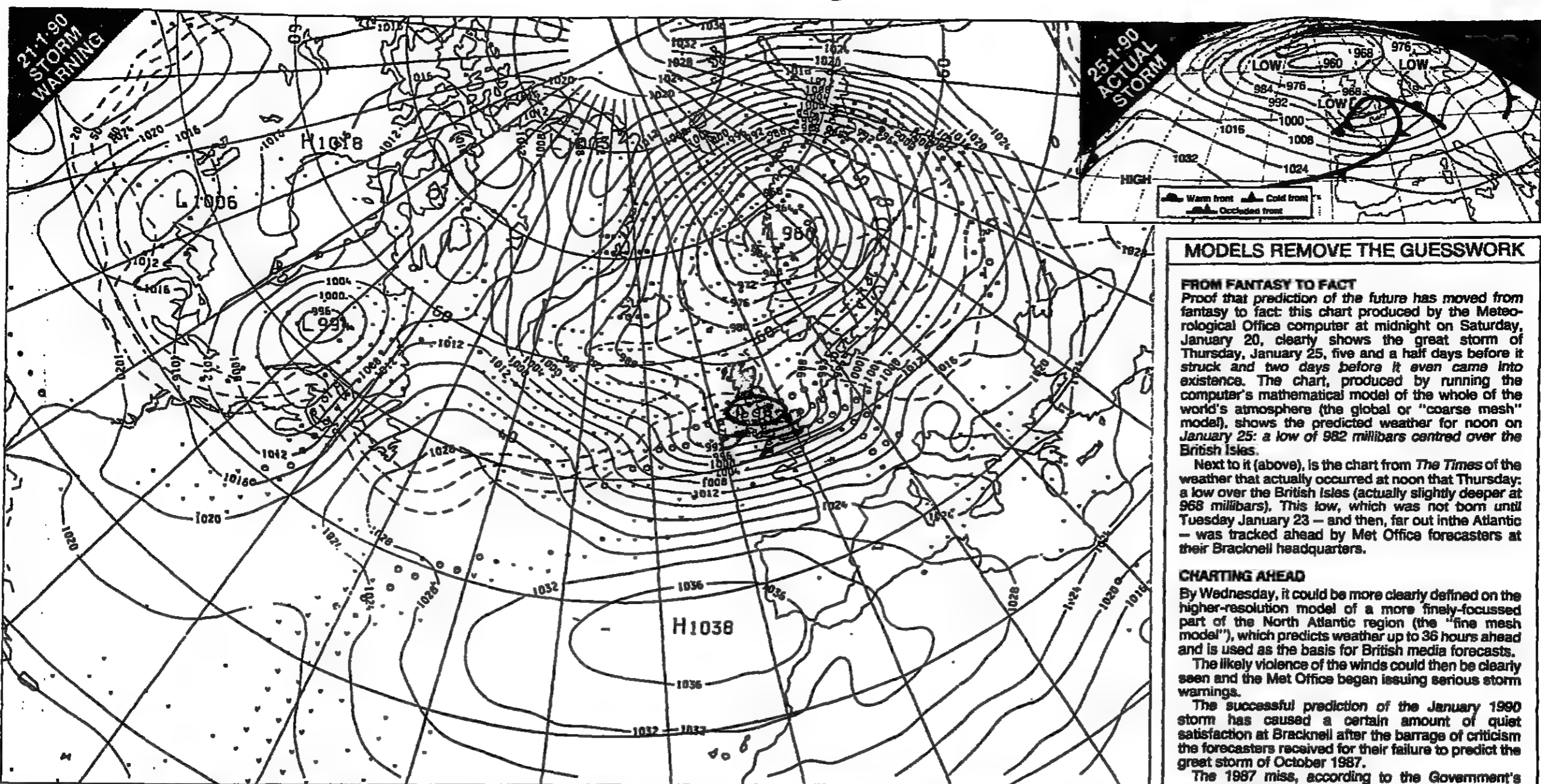
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22 1990

The men in the eye of the storm



MODELS REMOVE THE GUESSWORK

FROM FANTASY TO FACT
Proof that prediction of the future has moved from fantasy to fact: this chart produced by the Meteorological Office computer at midnight on Saturday, January 20, clearly shows the great storm of Thursday, January 25, five and a half days before it struck and two days before it even came into existence. The chart, produced by running the computer's mathematical model of the whole of the world's atmosphere (the global or "coarse mesh" model), shows the predicted weather for noon on January 25: a low of 982 millibars centred over the British Isles.

Next to it (above), is the chart from *The Times* of the weather that actually occurred at noon that Thursday: a low over the British Isles (actually slightly deeper at 988 millibars). This low, which was not born until Tuesday January 23 — and then, far out in the Atlantic — was tracked ahead by Met Office forecasters at their Bracknell headquarters.

CHARTING AHEAD

By Wednesday, it could be more clearly defined on the higher-resolution model of a more finely-focussed part of the North Atlantic region (the "fine mesh model"), which predicts weather up to 36 hours ahead and is used as the basis for British media forecasts.

The likely violence of the winds could then be clearly seen and the Met Office began issuing serious storm warnings.

The successful prediction of the January 1990 storm has caused a certain amount of quiet satisfaction at Bracknell after the barrage of criticism the forecasters received for their failure to predict the great storm of October 1987.

The 1987 miss, according to the Government's Independent report, was caused by a combination of inaccuracy in the computer predictions and a failure of the forecasters to compensate for this. As a result, more frequent runs of the numerical models were brought in, and forecasters were retrained in the latest computer science developments.

COMPUTER OVERHAUL

The Met Office's ageing supercomputer, a Cyber 205, dating from 1981, was also doubled in power while a new computer was brought in, with a new and more complex numerical model created to run on it.

"We do not take satisfaction in natural disasters," Colin Flood, the man in charge of forecasting, says. "But I think it is true to say that we are pleased that our professional skills have been vindicated." Flood says the chart on the left is remarkable in the success it represents. This cannot always be repeated by the mathematical models, even with the computer power now available. "I don't want people to think that we can get it as right as that every time," he says.

Britain's weather forecasters are looking forward eagerly to getting their hands on an extra day in the future. They will not be bending time, merely looking further ahead than now possible.

With a new computer which is the fastest commercially available in the world, and a new mathematical model of the atmosphere specially developed to run on it, they hope, later this year, to be able to predict the general weather pattern six days ahead instead of the present five.

Describing the future, so long the province of the mystic, has come true in recent years of weather forecasting, and is well illustrated by the case of the great gales of January 25 (see right).

Former methods of forecasting our changeable weather, from seaweed and tinges in the joints to keenly scanning the sky, have now been pushed firmly aside by what the Meteorological Office refer to as NWP — Numerical Weather Prediction.

It was suggested as long ago as 1922 by a British meteorologist, Lewis Richardson. All known atmospheric processes, Richardson said, such as movements in temperature and pressure and incidence of wind and rain, could be represented mathematically on a grid of the globe. Their interactions and subsequent development, according to Newton's laws of motion, could then be shown if enough observations were made and a machine was built that was capable of handling the calculations.

Neither of these conditions could be fulfilled in Richardson's lifetime, although full credit has been given to him for the idea. The wing housing the Central Forecasting Office at Bracknell bears his name. But the revolutions in telecommunications and electronics of the last 30 years have made possible both the instant access of huge amounts of data around the world, and its complex manipulating by extremely powerful computers and sophisticated software.

The Met Office has seized the opportunity. With a global observation system set up by



Colin Flood, the man in charge of forecasting, explains to *The Times* how the world's fastest computer and complex mathematics will give them six days advance warning

How accurate are predictions from the Met Office?

Weatherman

Colin Flood (left),

explains to

Michael McCarthy

how the world's

fastest computer

and complex

mathematics will

give them six days

advance warning

of the atmosphere — one of the whole earth, the global or "coarse mesh" model, and a higher-resolution or "fine mesh" model of the North Atlantic area.

One of only six in the world, the global model consists of a grid of 23,000 points over the surface of the Earth at a 150km interval, repeated up through the atmosphere at 15 different levels, giving a total of 345,000 points on which atmospheric processes such as temperature and pressure changes will be represented mathematically and allowed to interact.

These giant computer programs, vast though they are, are, of necessity, incomplete: to give a full picture of what is going on in the whole of the Earth's atmosphere would require an infinite amount of data. But they work.

"We're not trying to forecast every individual shower," Colin Flood, the Met Office's Divisional Director of Forecasting Services, says. He is the man responsible for weather forecasting in Britain. "The weather systems we are trying to forecast are typically 100 to 200 miles across and can be represented successfully with fewer observations," he says.

Observations by the thousands pour into Bracknell every hour down the special communications lines from points all over the world, carried out by national weather services, ships, planes, balloons and satellites, and coded numerically so they can be read independently of different languages.

In the sixties office block in the Berkshire new town, these observations are regularly fed into two mathematical models

On average, about 12,000 pieces of new data enter Bracknell every time the global model is run (with about 2,500 for the fine mesh); this is far too many for humans to input into the main CDC Cyber 205 computer, so the job is done by another computer, an IBM 3084Q.

The global model is run twice a day, and, progressing in steps of 15 minutes at a time, it takes about an hour to map out the weather mathematically for the next five days, as accurately as it was mapping out the next 24 hours 10 years ago. For each 15 minutes of the forecast, the Cyber, the fastest machine in the world when the Met Office bought it in 1981, solves about 1.5 million equations.

Fast though it is, (the Bracknell version is capable of 800 million floating point operations a second) there are machines that are now much faster. The Met Office has just bought a Cray YMP 8/32, the fastest computer on the market. For an outlay of more than £5 million, the Met Office has a piece of hardware four times faster than the Cyber, capable of 2.5 to 3 billion calculations a second. The weathermen have designed a new and more complex numerical model of the atmosphere to run on it.

This model, now undergoing trials, is known as the "unified" model because it will be used to predict long term climate change that could be brought about by the greenhouse effect, as well as to forecast the weather. At present a separate model is needed for climate change prediction on the Cyber.

Dr Mike Cullen, leader of the design team, is confident it will provide a specific bonus when it comes into full operation in the autumn.

"I would hope that the new model in forecasting the weather map would give us a standard of about six days, as opposed to the five we can currently achieve," he says. "We forecast to Thursday from Sunday lunchtime with some confidence. The Thursday storm was forecast on the Sunday before. We are looking for a gain of an extra day."

Although many observations, combined with massive computer power, can predict the future, Flood hastens to

correct the impression that weather forecasting is about nothing else. "It's about people as well," he says. "It's a man-machine mix. We get a better performance from using both man and machine than we would from using either in isolation."

The weathermen are needed to interpret computer forecasts, applying knowledge of how local features such as lakes or a range of hills are likely to affect weather patterns, and for spotting incorrect data.

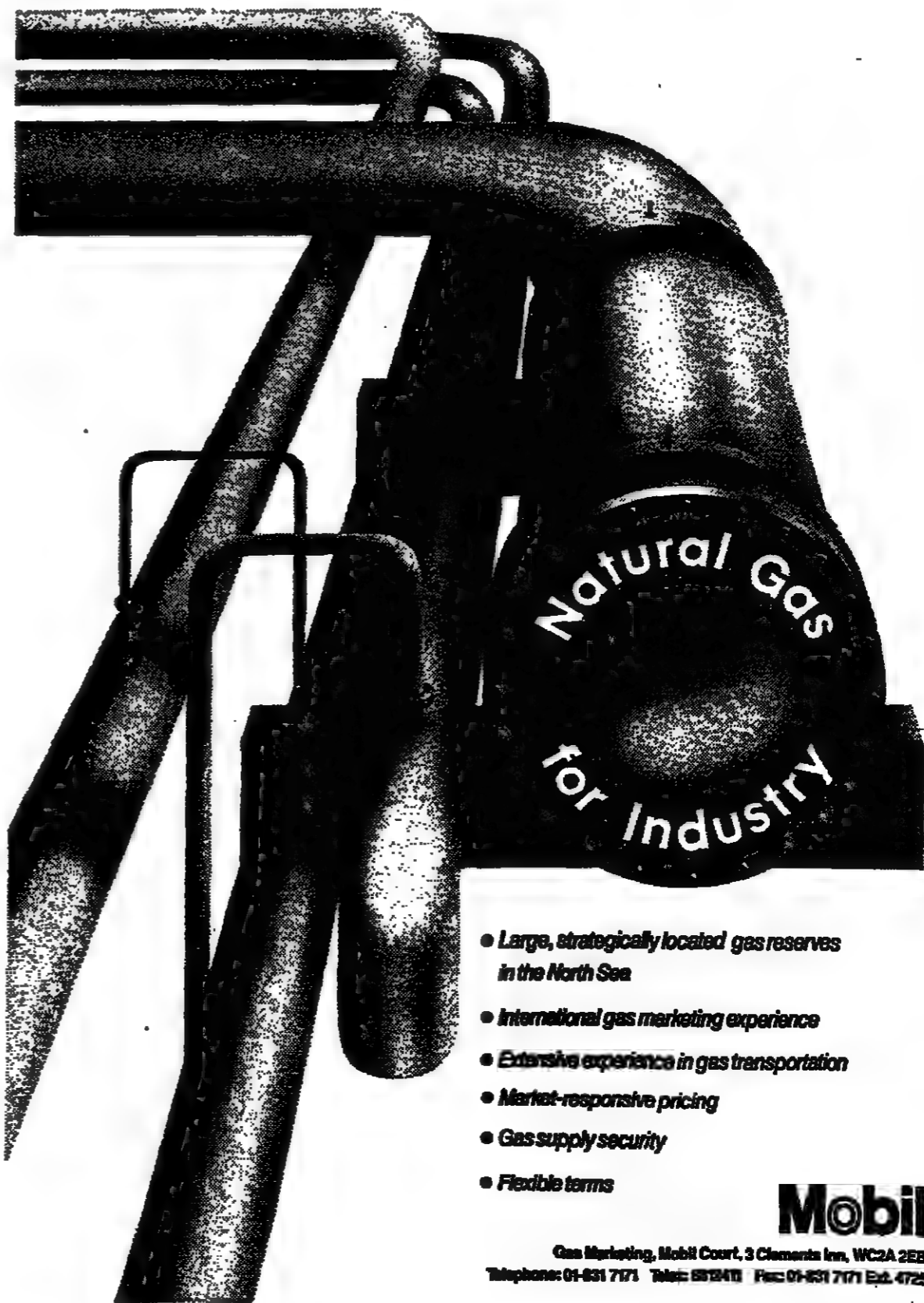
Flood took *The Times* on a tour of the Central Forecasting Office, which feels like a war room with its definite air of tension. At the first screen was

a forecast, with the wind blowing the wrong way around.

Nick Ricketts had spotted an observation sent in from a Delta Airlines Jumbo at 35,000ft over the Aleutian Islands off Alaska: the wind at 85 knots, 158 degrees — from the south east. Every other arrow in that area on his screen showed winds from just south of west. "It should have been 258 degrees," he said. "It was probably garbled in transmission. We'll just ignore it."

It is reassuring to know that when the world's fastest computer starts forecasting our weather later this year, there will be somebody around to give it a helping hand.

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TREES, TRUCKS AND TILES: TELLING THE REAL WEATHER STORY

Roof tiles, tree trunks and lorries may feature as much in future forecasts of severe weather in Britain as depressions, fronts and isobars, as a result of the devastating storms in January.

The Meteorological Office is considering expanding its forecasts of severe weather, moving from purely scientific previews of predicted conditions to highlights of the type of damage that can be expected.

Winds may be described not only as strong or severe, but also as capable of blowing over vehicles, of blowing down trees, or of lifting tiles off roofs, or roofs from houses. Clearer language and better explanations will be used to convey the strength of a storm.

The Met Office is considering the change in presentation after an internal inquiry into its performance in forecasting the gales last month. The forecasters are satisfied that they "got the science right".

The Thursday storm was predicted on the previous Sunday, and, by Wednesday



night, its likely severity was known and flashed to the media. But the question is: did people get the message? Did people appreciate that the coming storm meant falling trees and, possibly, damage to buildings?

Colin Flood, the operational head of Britain's weather forecasting, thinks the warning might have been hammered home more effectively. "We got the warning out on time to the media," he says. "It's a question of whether it was highlighted when it was there."

The BBC and ITN have been asking the same question, and after discussions with both organizations, Flood and his colleagues believe the message in such circumstances may need reinforcing by

specific references to the effects of the predicted storm.

"I think we need to include more of the effects of weather on people," he says. "We need to know, and to say: what sort of wind speed causes a slate to come off a roof? What causes a roof to come off? What wind speed causes a tree, or a high-sided vehicle to topple over?"

Flood is setting up a project to bring together the information, much of which has already been researched by the Forestry Commission, the Road Research Laboratory and the Building Research Establishment.

The information is likely to be available for use in forecasts from later this year.

Flood says the Met Office's predictions can be remarkably accurate now. The success in forecasting the January 25 storm was an example of predicting a weather system which had not come into existence. "A lot of people seem to have the impression that we just find a system in the Atlantic and track it across."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A search for the perfect match

The life of a young boy depends on a 'needle in a haystack' bid to find a bone marrow donor.

Thomson Prentice tells how donors are screened



MICHAEL POWELL

Researchers at the world's biggest register of potential bone marrow transplant donors are engaged in a life-saving quest this week, on behalf of a boy struck by leukaemia.

The odds are stacked against Simon Flavell, aged nine. In a cruel coincidence, he suffers from the same rare form of the disease that his parents, both cancer specialists, have been investigating for years.

Already, more than 135,000 blood samples from possible donors have been screened at the Anthony Nolan Research Centre, based at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, north west London. But a perfect match remains elusive.

Bone marrow transplants only succeed fully when the patient and donor have identical tissue types. Simon's case is more complex because he is Eurasian: his father is British, his mother Thai. "This means we are looking for a smaller needle in a bigger haystack," Richard Holman, laboratory manager at the centre, says.

Leukaemia is a primary disorder of the bone marrow stem cell. Instead of dividing and producing the cellular elements of the blood in an orderly way, the leukaemic cell reproduces itself many times, but there is no ensuing production of normal red cells, white cells and platelets.

Sufferers become anaemic and vulnerable to infections and the risk of bleeding. In two thirds of cases, the condition can be cured by chemotherapy, but Simon belongs in the unfortunate third for whom a transplant is the only alternative.

Tissue-typing the samples involves defining all the different proteins, or antigens, present on the cells of body tissues.

White blood cells, or leucocytes, have virtually the same surface antigens as many other tissues, including bone marrow. The human leucocyte antigen system (HLA) has at least five different subsystems, each containing up to 20 different antigen types.

Thus, the number of possible permutations is enormous, and a perfect match between patient and donor is crucial before a transplant can be considered.

To tissue-type a prospective donor, a blood sample is taken. In the laboratory, the red and white cells are separated and then reacted with specific proteins or antisera that recognize the different leucocyte antigens.

Scientists observe the pattern of reactivity of the donor's white cells, and obtain a precise statement of the donor's HLA tissue type. The

results are then recorded on the centre's computer data base which is searched when a request is received for a donor with a given tissue type.

The final stage of the process is to confirm the accuracy of the match. White blood cells from the patient and the prospective donor are collected on the same day and mixed in a test tube.

After a five-day incubation period, the cells are examined to see if they are compatible. If so, the donor is requested to donate bone marrow so that the transplant can go ahead.

The marrow is taken from the donor under general anaesthetic in an operation lasting about one hour.

Marrow cells are collected with a syringe from the cavity of the hip bone and the sternum, or breast bone. No surgical incision is involved, and the donor usually spends a further day in hospital for recuperation. The cells which have been removed are replaced from the body's reserves within a few weeks.

"We are working overtime to find a donor for Simon," Richard Holman says. "His life is at stake and we are still hopeful that among the large number of Eurasian donors now coming forward, a perfect match will be found."

Simon's father, Dr David Flavell, and mother, Dr Sopsamorn Flavell, are leukaemia researchers at Southampton General Hospital. "We are enormously grateful to the centre for the efforts it is making," David Flavell says.

The Anthony Nolan Research Centre has arranged 260 transplants so far and last year helped patients in 15 countries. The centre was set up in 1974 and named after Anthony Nolan, then aged two, who was born in Australia but whose parents brought him to England in search of a bone marrow transplant to cure his rare condition. No suitable donor was found and he died in 1979, at the age of seven.

Although the centre is the world's biggest register of potential donors, it receives no financial support from the National Health Service, and is funded by a charity of the same name. Today its staff work in temporary cabins in the grounds of the Royal Free Hospital, and the project is desperately short of cash.

Potential bone marrow donors or those wanting to make a financial contribution to the centre should contact the Anthony Nolan Research Centre, the Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW2 2QG.



Quest for life: a researcher screens donors while (inset) Simon and his parents wait and hope

SCIENCE REPORT

The case of the missing pulsar

The mystery of the disappearing pulsar in the remnant of supernova SN1987A has been solved — it never seems to have been there in the first place. In a surprise announcement at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in New Orleans, astronomer John Middleditch revealed that the source of the pulsar's signal came not from the heavens, but from interference from laboratory equipment closer to home.

Giant stars often end their lives explosively as supernovae, sending vast quantities of matter into space. The remnant of the star's core, still very massive, collapses under its own weight to become a neutron star, more massive than the Sun but only a few miles across. If the neutron star rotates and has a magnetic field, it will send energetic radio pulses across the sky, in the same way that rotating lighthouses illuminate the surrounding seas. Rotating neutron stars are called pulsars, short for "pulsating stars", and the frequency at which a pulsar's radio beams sweep the sky is a measure of how fast it is spinning.

A supernova in a nearby galaxy in January, 1987 — an event catalogued as SN1987A — generated excitement on Earth, because it was the first nearby supernova to have been observed since the invention of the telescope.

Astronomers eagerly watched the dusty remnant for signs of a pulsar, and, on January 18 last year, Middleditch and 14 colleagues believed they had found one (*Nature* (vol. 338, pp. 234-236; 16 March 1989). Radio signals from a putative pulsar were recorded for just seven hours, but then disappeared: they have not been seen again.

The story did not end there, because this particular pulsar was thought to be rotating at a truly enormous speed: 1968.629 times per second. Several pulsars are known with rotation rates of the order of milliseconds, but the rotation of the new star outpaced even these.

Nobody could explain how a star could rotate so rapidly and yet still remain in one piece. Explanations have been many and varied (Science Report, March '23 1989).

But most researchers were more puzzled by its disappearance. At the conference, Middleditch was to

discuss reasons for the pulsar's continued absence, and took the opportunity to reveal that the 1987A signal may have come from a piece of

observatory apparatus rather than SN1987A. When the radio telescope was pointed at the

well-known pulsar in the Crab Nebula, the same frequency was recorded. That both pulsars happened to be resonating at exactly the same frequency at the same time was implausible.

This was admitted by Sol Perlmutter of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California, one of Middleditch's colleagues involved in the pulsar's discovery. It is more likely that the source was artificial rather than natural: researchers are still checking the equipment for the source of the signal. One cause could have been a part of the guidance system that compensates for the Earth's rotation.

The news is disappointing in one sense, but Perlmutter and his colleagues take heart from the fact that the pulsar, real or apparent, provided the impetus for the rapid development of these areas of astrophysics to explain its behaviour.

Henry Gee

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Continued on page 38

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AMERICAN SCIENCE ON A BIG SCALE

Profiting from the name game

Billboard-sized name badges that can be read at 20 paces are the hallmark of an American convention. Although they may seem incidental, the identity tags pinned to 5,000 delegates at the 156th annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, meeting in New Orleans this week, provided a clear, if simple, illustration of the difference between the United States organization and its UK cousin, the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

The difference in scale was marked by audiences which packed into commercial conference halls, attached to hotels, each capable of seating 1,000 or more people. Last Monday night, the 3,500-seater Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel had standing room only for Sally Ride, America's first woman astronaut and now professor of physics at the University of California at San Diego.

She addressed the gathering on a plan, devised by a working group she chaired for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's latest space venture, Mission to Planet Earth, which is part of an international environmental research programme to monitor the planet from a new series of spacecraft.

There is more than a difference in scale between the selling of science American-style and the British way. The US organization is a powerful publishing operation. Its membership of 132,000 has much to do with the fact that it comes as part of a subscription to *Science*, the association's weekly journal.

The counterpart British organization has a university-based annual meeting, which visits a different campus each year. It has made the public understanding of science its main thread over the past few years. The American organization deliberately chooses places that are likely to attract delegates for reasons beyond attending the conference. Hence the meeting in New Orleans: belle of the southern States, birthplace of jazz and home of a Mardi Gras festival from January 6 until next Tuesday.

However, there are common problems for those seeking to promote the cause of science. Indeed, Sir Klaus Moser, president of the British association, has told his opposite number, Professor Richard Atkinson, of moves in the UK over the past few years to reach a younger audience through the British Association for Young Scientists.

Atkinson, who is also chancellor of the University of California at San Diego, predicts a "human resources crisis in science" and says the shortage of qualified scientists and engineers is more threatening than recent restrictions on research spending.

The gap between demand and supply for scientists and engineers at all degree levels is expected to be 500,000 by the end of this decade. But delegates to the meeting arrived to hear some encouraging news — a Bush administration proposal for a 7 per cent increase in selected areas of science and technology spending, bringing a total of \$68 billion (£40 billion) next year.

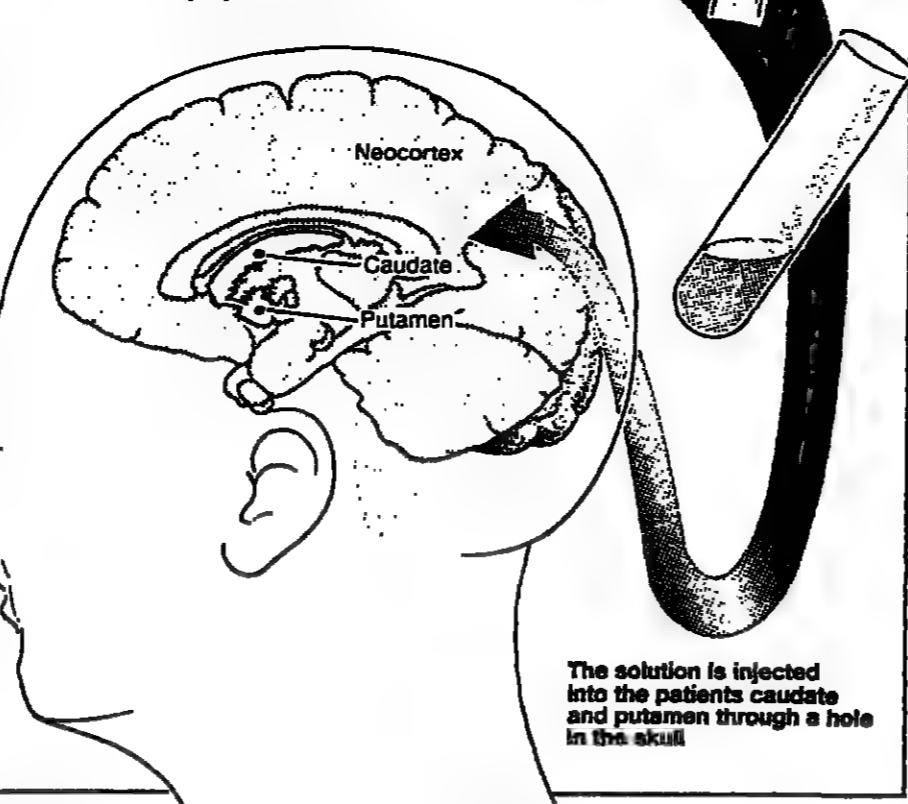
Science gains most with space administration getting a \$2.8 billion (£1.6 billion) increase to start construction an international space station.

The National Institutes of Health get an increase barely sufficient to keep pace with inflation, although this includes a modest boost for AIDS-related research.

Pearce Wright

Deficiency of the chemical messenger dopamine, in the caudate and putamen parts of the brain, is the cause of Parkinson's Disease

Foetal tissue from the developing central nervous system is prepared in solution



The solution is injected into the patients caudate and putamen through a hole in the skull

A neural key

Scientists weigh the value and ethics of foetal tissue implants

Remarkable progress is shown, on video tapes made at six-monthly intervals over the past two years, in the condition of a 40-year-old woman given a brain implant to treat Parkinson's disorder, a disease that causes uncontrollable tremors and lack of balance, usually found in older people.

The woman has responded best among 18 people given implants of tissue taken from the adrenal glands. The object of the implant is to make up for a deficiency in the brain of one of its chemical messengers, dopamine.

The treatment was reported to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, by Professor George Allen, head of the department of neurosurgery at Vanderbilt University Medical Centre, in Nashville, Tennessee. He said that more research was needed to establish the effectiveness of brain implants, whether they were of the adrenal medullary tissues, such as he had used, or tissue taken from 10 to 14-week-old fetuses, which other groups have used.

Allen, who has performed the most implant operations for Parkinson's disease in the world, was setting out the medical position before a discussion began on the ethics of foetal tissue implants.

It is a question every country will eventually have to address. In Britain over the past 10 years, it has been shown that brain damage and damage to other parts of the central nervous system can be regenerated. Substances called growth factors can induce nerve cells to reproduce, making transplantation of neural tissue possible.

Those discoveries contradicted previous assumptions regarding the irreversibility of damage to the central nervous system. Several hundred patients have undergone treatment of Parkinson's. Although many scientists believe the application of these findings have great potential for treating neurological disorders, many ethical issues arise.

What happens if medical research shows that foetal tissue can be used to cure a

range of diseases and disorders such as diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimers, leukaemia or quadriplegia?

Transplants have been successful in animal experiments, and scientists are close to adapting animal testing to humans, using tissue from aborted fetuses.

Experiments in human foetal cell transplants have been tried in the US, Australia, China, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Mexico, Soviet Union, Sweden, Britain and Yugoslavia.

A possible solution to the major ethical problem of using foetal tissue has been proposed by Professor Fred Gage, the head of neurosciences at the University of California in San Diego.

His group has experimented with genetically engineered cells, grown in the laboratory, which can be designed to produce the missing chemical messenger that is missing.

He reported preliminary findings of experiments with mice and the production of dopamine, that suggested that laboratory-made cells could provide a source of implants.

But he said the idea was several years away from any realistic attempt at human implantation.

Pearce Wright

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Bombing the Earth

The first life forms on Earth — more than 3 billion years ago — had trouble establishing themselves because of the planet's bombardment by asteroids and comets. Objects large enough to evaporate all of Earth's oceans hit frequently between 4.5 and 3.8 billion years ago, in the early stages of the formation of the solar system. Those collisions periodically wiped out all forms of life. The American Association for the Advancement of Science was told this week that the impact of these objects influenced the location and timing of the origin of life on Earth. The report was given by Doctor James Kasting of Pennsylvania State University and a team of scientists from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa).

Nature's risk

Nature's own cancer-causing chemicals that are an unavoidable part of foods represent a greater health danger than pesticides and other pollutants, a health official warned the association. An estimate by the United States Food and Drug Administration concluded that more than 98 per cent of the cancer risk in the diet comes from ordinary foods — not from

BRIEFING

additives, poisons or other man-made contributions to the food chain. Dr Robert Scheuplein, director of the Office of Toxicological Sciences at the US Food and Drug Administration, said: "The risk is from natural carcinogens in the diet because they overwhelm all the others." Scheuplein's analysis was intended to focus attention away from chemical contamination of food, which he believes is a bogus health issue.

TB increases

An alarming report suggests that tuberculosis could return as an epidemic. The study, by Dr John McGowan, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, at Bethesda, Maryland, suggests that increases in cases of TB have already begun in the United States and are linked directly to infection by the virus that can lead to AIDS. TB is easily spread in crowded conditions, such as on public transport and in overcrowded living conditions. Dr William Haseltine, of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, in Boston told the association that the threat was a "major public health problem imposed on beleaguered inner western cities and Third World countries".

XEeding Expectations.

"At last a notebook computer that isn't as thick as two planks". Toshiba's claim for the new 20Mb T-1000XE launched last week. Literally fact. Metaphorically an arguable claim. Also launched was the Toshiba T-1200XE. Not quite as small, but with 286 processing power. For all the facts, prices and opinions call Morse.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Float or flop for sky cruiser?

Chris Partridge
reports on the
airship, which has
set sail in a new era
of possible military
and leisure uses

It is make or break time for Airship Industries — a prime force in a revival of the airship. Is the modern airship about to fly into big profits or to suffer the fate of the dinosaur, finding itself too big, too unwieldy and too costly to survive?

The company stands on a knife-edge: several large projects are still uncertain and the leading backer, Alan Bond, the Australian businessman, is in financial trouble and unable to fund further development. Yet Admiral Ned Hogan, chief executive of Airship Industries, is confident that the company is about to make a lot of money.

A project to build airships in Saudi Arabia in collaboration with British Aerospace and a local consortium is said to be reaching the final stages of negotiation.

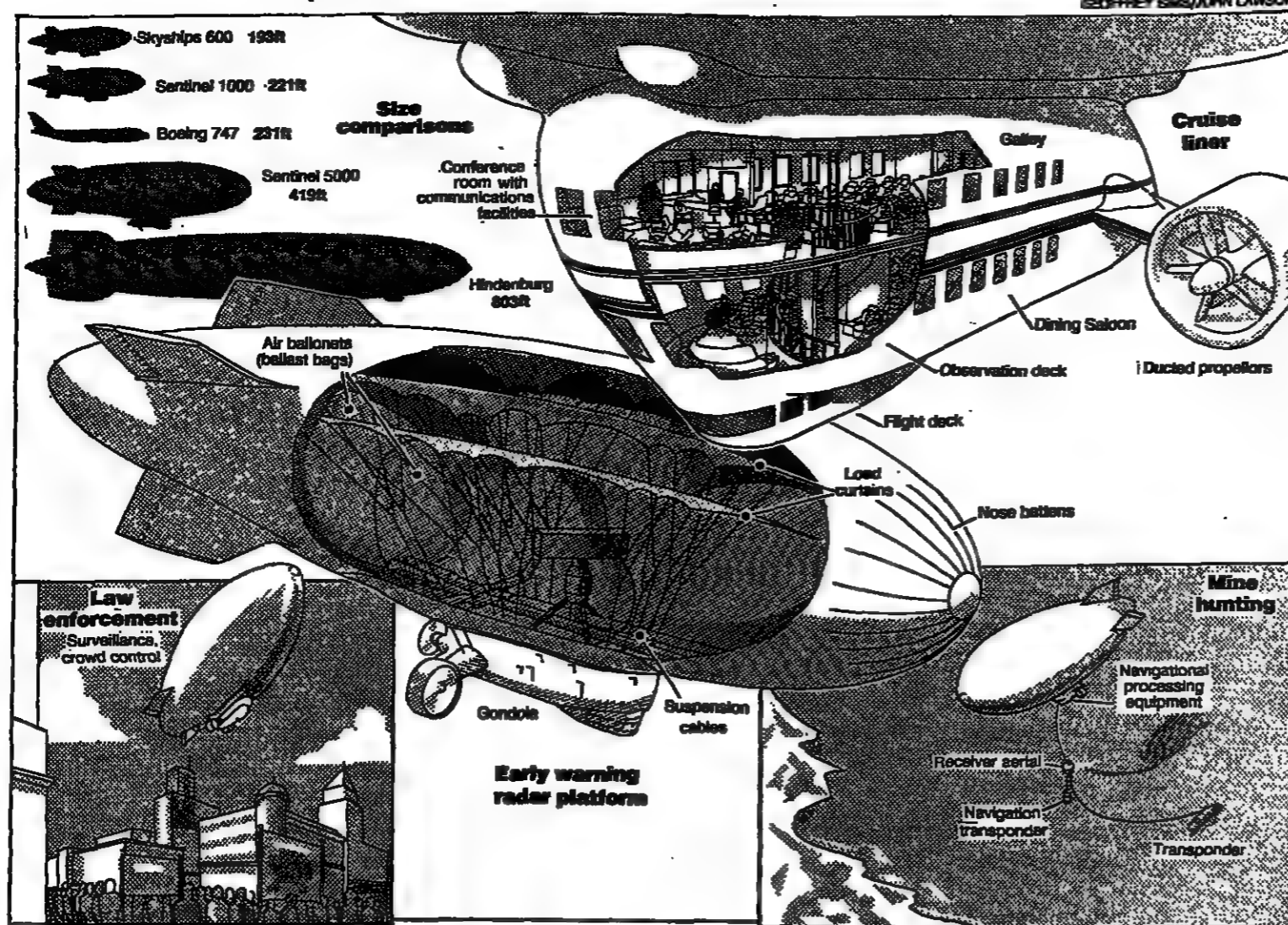
Last week at an air show in Singapore, the company unveiled a new ship, the Sentinel 1000, which will be the biggest ever built when it makes its first flight in the United States later this year.

But it is unlikely to hold the record for long, being only half the size of a huge airship, the Sentinel 5000, that the same company is building in partnership with the big defence contractor Westinghouse. It is planned to carry early warning radars to protect US naval forces.

Several other uses for airships are under consideration. ● Admiral Hogan was in the US last week, making a final presentation in his attempt to sell airships to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to detect and intercept drug-running speedboats approaching the US coast from South America.

● Airships are being promoted as a method of coastal surveillance and crowd control.

● Airships could be used as mine-sweepers, either towing a sweep through the water or acting as a mother ship to a robot minesweeping submarine. An airship could clear a channel in half the time of a helicopter or a minesweeping ship,



is invulnerable to the mines, and able to reach the scene quickly.

● The Sentinel 5000 would be big enough to become a "cruise liner of the skies", carrying 70 people in luxury, in a three-deck gondola with spacious dining room, saloon and observation deck.

A firm commitment on any of these projects would transform Airship Industries from a company with a promising technology and a huge debt burden to a company with a future.

The technology is impressive. The AI airships are totally different from the Zeppelins of 60 years ago. They were rigid airships, a huge ribcage of aluminium girders supporting a bag or envelope filled with explosive hydrogen.

The modern airship is a blimp, a non-rigid envelope inflated with safe, non-toxic, non-explosive helium. The envelope is made of a

new plastic laminate, a sandwich with a plastic fabric on the inside, a polyurethane coating loaded with titanium dioxide on the outside to prevent attack by ultraviolet rays, and two plastic films on the inside to prevent the escape of the helium gas. Less than 10 per cent of the gas escapes in a year, it is claimed.

A gondola made partly of Kevlar, a strong, lightweight plastic also used for bulletproof body armour, hangs beneath the envelope. It contains the cabin and the two Porsche engines.

Pilots control the ship by computer, linked to the control surfaces and pumps by optical fibres, a "fly by light" system, developed in Britain by GEC. Optical fibres are immune to the effect of lightning strikes. The airship goes up and down by

making the volume of the helium gas greater or less. The greater the volume, the faster the balloon goes up. The volume is changed by inflating small balloons inside the envelope with air. On the ground, the airship is tethered to a mast.

Current airships, the 500 and 600 series, are seen in the skies over Britain as advertising blimps. They are nearly 200ft long and 50ft wide, containing 235,000 cu ft of helium. Maximum speed is about 100mph and the maximum load exceeds two tonnes.

The new Sentinel 1000 will be 221ft long and contain 354,000 cu ft of gas. Payload will be substantially increased, but the main advantage of the bigger size will be the greater height it will be able to reach, 8,000ft, and the greater endurance.

That is just a prelude to the Sentinel 5000, which can carry up to 70 passengers. However, the ship

under development for Westinghouse will be carrying an early warning radar platform.

It will be 425ft long and capable of operating at 10,000ft, at speeds of more than 150 mph, and staying on station for a month if regularly refuelled. The airship's envelope is planned to contain a phased-array radar capable of detecting incoming missiles and aircraft hundreds of miles away, and tracking them.

The fact that the airship is such a large, slow-moving object seems to make it vulnerable, but this is misleading. The plastic envelope is practically invisible to radar, and "stealth" materials applied to the gondola will make it very discreet.

Even if a missile pierces the envelope, it will simply pass through. The hole would need to be over 15ft in diameter before the airship needed to worry about hurrying home.

JOBS

Plan to stem brain drain

Merit schemes are
being used to help
keep IT staff in
the public sector

Special schemes introduced by the Government to retain its qualified information technology staff are not enough to prevent severe shortages in some areas.

The Department of Social Security is trying to convince the Treasury to let it introduce merit awards for individuals and project teams in a bid to stem the flow of high-level IT staff leaving for the better-paid private sector.

Just under 10,000 IT staff work for the Civil Service, with the Ministry of Defence employing some 1800, the DSS, 1700 and the Inland Revenue, about 1300.

But many are trainees and often leave to work for commercial firms once they have gained marketable skills. Surveys show that the average salary for IT development staff is just over £14,000 which is below average.

To tackle this problem, the Civil Service is offering its IT staff improved training, career promotion prospects and a bonus scheme aimed at attracting short-term contractors.

The Government has removed the requirement that IT staff must sit the standard Civil Service exams before they can be hired. This matches the system for other specialists, such as economists.

IT staff no longer have to prove their efficiency at other administrative skills, but can be promoted on programming skills alone.

The Treasury's IT body, the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency, says the Civil Service is recruiting enough IT staff, but has a problem getting the required level of specialist skills in the right location.

For example, it is difficult to recruit software engineers in

London as the majority of computer-services companies are bidding for the same skills. To attract short-term contractors, who tend to shun the public sector, a performance bonus of up to 40 per cent of annual salary is being offered.

But such bonuses have angered the public-sector unions, which say that permanent staff cannot receive such grand bonuses and that the cash would be better spent on developing the existing staff's skills.

While the grading and pay structures are being amended, other departments are handing over system-development work to computer-services companies.

Tom McCafferty, president of the Computing Services Association, says that government investment with private-sector companies is still "glacially slow" but is increasing dramatically.

He says that this is in line with the Government's commitment to contract out a third of public-sector procurement for IT on the basis of a "trade not aid" policy.

The DSS's £1.7 billion Operational Strategy, which is said to be the largest computerization project in the world, is a case in point. The plan is to create three computer centres to handle the payment of income support and pensions.

The first of these is due to open in Livingston, Lothian, in 1991 and the Government decided to contract out the project to the private sector in order to introduce "competitive pressure".

Electronic Data Systems won the contract for the first two centres. An unusual feature of the plan is that EDS is recruiting IT staff from the DSS with the backing of the department.

Government departments are also forming skills partnerships with private-sector firms to make up the shortfall of senior professionals in the public sector. HM Customs & Excise has this year signed up with BIS Applied Systems and Logics for a four-year period to redevelop the VAT system.

Leslie Tilley

Continued from
page 36

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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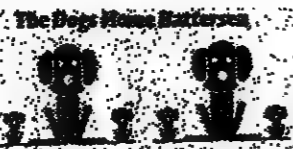
When Mary Tealby founded the Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs 130 years ago, she was unaware that she was creating a national institution.

This might seem an extravagant term for a group of buildings clustered alongside a railway viaduct on an unattractive stretch of London's riverside. However it is undeniable that for millions of people the Dogs Home Battersea has come to symbolize man's care and compassion for his fellow creatures, even though the fact that such an institution is needed at all is also an indictment of his cruelty and neglect.

The home's reputation has spread far beyond Britain's shores. It has supporters in many other countries and, among the thousands of legacies it has received, one of the most remarkable was a gift of £140,000 from an anonymous donor in Switzerland.

Inevitably, it also has its critics. The thought of hundreds of animals caged in wire pens can, and does, upset many people who have closed their minds to the alternatives. But, on the whole, good will far exceeds criticism, and in the "dog days" that follow Christmas and the New Year many a news-starved editor has been only too happy to be supplied with a story about an abandoned puppy.

While sentiment may be good for publicity, the fact is that the home provides an essential service in keeping the streets of London free of a potential menace to public health and safety. In many Third World countries the menace is only too obvious; some years ago the writer arrived in Trinidad



**Today Prince
Michael of Kent
launches a £2
million appeal
for the Dogs
Home Battersea,
its first call for
help in 130 years**

late at night in the middle of a curfew. Hundreds of stray dogs were roaming the otherwise silent and empty streets. It was a disturbing sight.

Battersea's administrators are constantly on the defensive against suggestions that dogs rounded up and brought to the home are routinely destroyed. The notorious recent advertisement published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, showing a heap of dead dogs, provoked a serious breach in relations.

"The RSPCA really shot themselves in the foot," Tom Field-Fisher QC, the chairman of the home's management committee, says. "It infuriated animal lovers, and gave a totally distorted pic-

ture." A planned repeat of the advertisement has since been rejected by the Advertising Standards Authority.

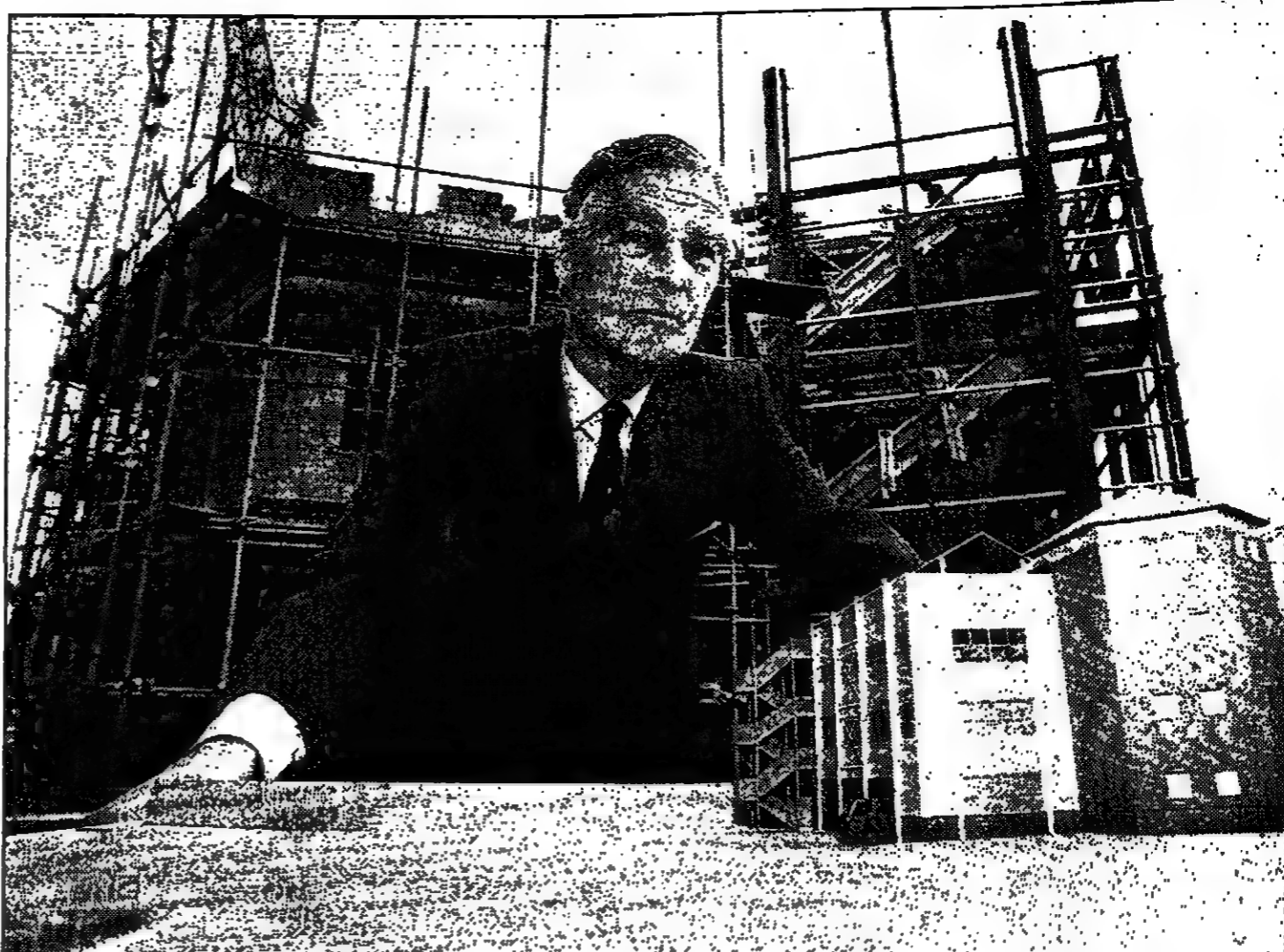
In a sense the RSPCA was right. Only about 14 per cent of the dogs brought to the home are reclaimed by their owners. About half the remainder are found new homes and the rest are put down. In 1988, out of a total of 22,236 dogs for which the home found itself responsible, 9,232 were eventually destroyed.

But the staff are committed to "re-homing" as many animals as it can. The home is under a statutory obligation to keep every dog for seven days after it is brought in; if it is not claimed within that period it becomes the home's property.

At that stage a dog may be put down if it is considered too old or sick to have a realistic chance of a happy future with a new owner, if it is suffering from an infectious disease which threatens the health of other animals in the home, or if it is too dangerous to be offered for sale. The rest are kept, often for several months, some have found new owners after a year or more in the home.

Mary Tealby opened her home in Holloway, North London, in 1860; 11 years later it was moved to Battersea, where it has remained since. Two days after Christmas 1885, General Sir Henry Ponsonby, Queen Victoria's private secretary, wrote a letter in which he "humbly begs leave to ask if Your Majesty will be pleased to become a Patron of the Lost Dogs Home?"

The reply was immediate. "Most certainly. No one loves dogs more than the Queen or



Kennel care: chairman of Battersea's management committee, Tom Field-Fisher, QC, with plans for the home's £2 million kennel extensions

would wish to do more to promote their comfort and happiness. They are man's truest friends."

Victoria's great-great-granddaughter, frequently depicted with her beloved corgis, has retained royal interest in the home and is its present patron. Its president is Prince Michael of Kent, who will launch today's appeal for £2 million to pay for a new kennel block, the first time in the home's 130-year history that it has invited public donations on a large scale.

Traditionally, most of the cost of running the home — now about £1.5 million a year — is met by the income from legacies and investments. About £250,000 comes from its contract with the Metro-

politan Police, which is responsible for rounding up strays and for paying for their food and accommodation during the first seven days. A further £250,000 comes from the sale of dogs to new owners.

About 70,000 people visit the home every year. Most are potential purchasers. But the staff maintain a rigid "vetting" procedure to ensure that any would-be purchaser is "a fit and proper person" to be a dog owner.

He or she must answer a comprehensive questionnaire, and is warned to expect one or

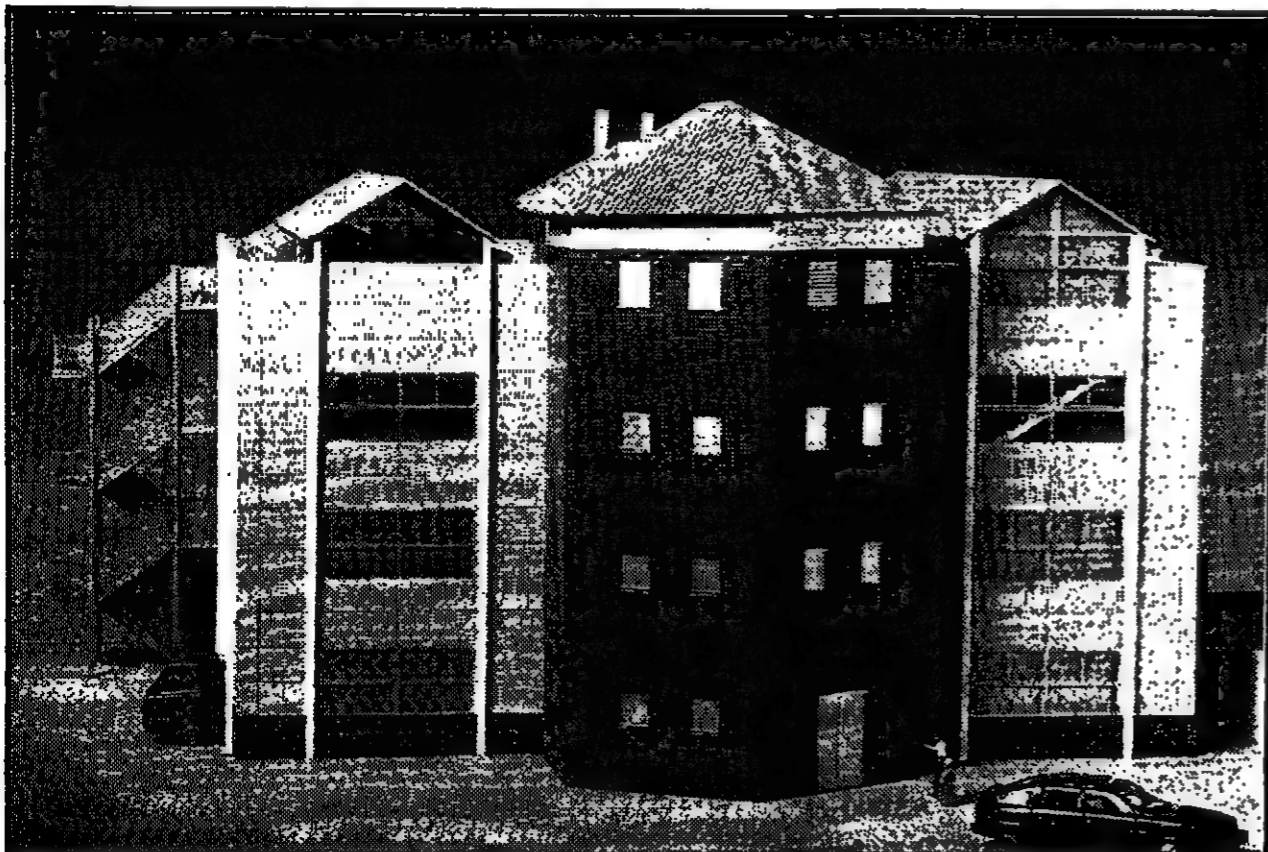
more subsequent visits to ensure that the animal is being properly cared for. There are about nine visitors for every dog sold; obviously, if the ratio could be improved, fewer dogs would have to be destroyed. But the management is determined to minimize the risk of an animal being maltreated or abandoned for a second time.

The purchase price is normally set at about £25, a figure intended not only to enable the home to recover at least part of its costs, but also to prevent a dog being resold at a profit or, worse, being bought by a dealer for sale to an animal experimentation laboratory.

Since the home was founded, more than 2.5 million dogs have received food and shelter. The numbers taken in each year rose fairly steadily during most of the 1980s, although there has been a slight decline during the last two years.

"These are not proud statistics," a recent home leaflet points out. The fact that fewer than 15 per cent of lost and stray dogs are reclaimed by their owners means that most have been deliberately turned out as unwanted pets.

"This may be offensive to people in a country that likes to believe itself a nation of dog lovers, but it is true, none the less."



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The ideal: Colonel Tony Hare, director general of the home, would like to have enough staff to open on Sundays for families

No longer such a dog's life

The idea of a new multi-storey kennel block to relieve overcrowding at the Dogs Home Battersea was agreed to in principle some time ago. When Bill Wadham-Taylor was appointed manager and veterinary surgeon in 1984, he made it clear that in his view more accommodation was essential, not only on welfare grounds, but to control the spread of disease.

Battersea has always had more dogs than kennels but during the past decade the number of strays has reached crisis point. At any one time, 500 dogs are being cared for, and the new block, providing space for up to 250, should mean that every animal will have its own room.

Work on the building began last July and is due for completion this summer. Despite the difficulties caused by poor access to the site, it is proceeding on time. Hygiene

Concern about overcrowding and the spread of disease prompted the building of a new kennel block

considerations, and the fact that the interior needs regular hosing, require high construction standards. Non-deteriorating materials, including non-corrosive steel, are being used and each floor will be lined with epoxy resin to prevent water penetration. On the ground floor there will be garages for the vans, used daily to collect animals from police stations all over the Greater London area. On the same floor there will be holding kennels, a canine morgue and incinerators.

The first two floors will be open-plan, the kennels segregated by passageways to allow feeding, inspection and removal of wastes. Heating, cooling and ventilation will provide a controlled climate and eliminate the smells that characterize most kennels. "It is a challenge to any contractor to achieve 101 per cent perfection," Freddie Francis, contracts manager for Neilson Construction, the main contractor, says. "But that is what we are trying to do."

To judge from models, the building should be more attractive in appearance than many that are designed for humans. "We have tried to put some architecture into it," Tim McGee, of Devereux and Partners, says.

The building will be used primarily to house dogs of-

ferred for sale, and Colonel Tony Hare, the home's director general, hopes that it will attract more visitors. Ideally he would like to have enough staff to open on Sundays, the day for family outings when children often put pressure on parents to look for a new pet.

The home is a registered charity, and donations are tax deductible. Those donating £10,000 or more will be entitled to have a kennel named after them or a nominee, and £25 to "buy a brick" entitles donors to have their names inscribed on a Roll of Honour to be buried in a time capsule for 100 years.

By then there may perhaps be fewer strays on the streets and less pressure on the home's resources. Today's appeal is officially for £2 million, but a more appropriate target would be £2.7 million; £1 for every animal the home has sheltered in the past 130 years.

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On the 22nd of February 1990, the police in London were alerted to a possible bomb threat. The threat was made by a man who claimed to be a member of the IRA. The police were alerted to the threat by a man who claimed to be a member of the IRA. The police were alerted to the threat by a man who claimed to be a member of the IRA.

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Counsel for the canines

As a dog-lover, it was only natural that Tom Field-Fisher, QC, would take a leading role at Battersea and argue the dogs' case in government and other official circles



Tom Field-Fisher, the chairman of Battersea's management committee, is an urbane and affable QC who has been associated with the home for the past quarter of a century.

His love of dogs began when he was a child in the country, where his family kept terriers as gun-dogs, and he has owned a succession of terriers ever since.

His involvement in animal welfare began when he was "a very junior and inexperienced member of the Bar" after the war and when he was supplementing his income by writing for legal publications. Field-Fisher became something of a specialist in the law concerning animals, and was approached to serve on various committees, including the Home Office advisory committee on animal experimentation.

Though not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the home, he is responsible for all policy matters and, since succeeding to the post in 1984, has been an outspoken critic of the Government's failure to come to terms with the problem not just of stray dogs but of promoting more socially responsible ownership.

The animals rounded up and taken to Battersea are the most visible aspect of a much more widespread problem.

Compared with the 20,000-plus dogs given shelter by the dogs' home every year, there are many times that number which are underfed, mistreated and generally not properly cared for. Dogs are allowed to roam streets and public places unsupervised (lurcher dogs), with consequent risks to human health and safety, and dogs in rural areas are often not kept under proper control, so that they



Somebody's treasure — or just an unwanted dog? Another guest is introduced to the home

moist sheep and other farm livestock.

There are still others not given adequate veterinary treatment for routine ailments.

In 1988, the RSPCA, the

British Veterinary Association and the National Farmers' Union joined forces in calling on the Government to raise the dog licence fee to a realistic level from the 37p at which it had remained since it was

introduced in the last century. Ironically, some of the first dogs brought to Battersea were not strays but those whose owners were too poor to pay the then exorbitant sum of 7s 6d.

The Government refuses to grapple with the problem

The idea was that the revenue from the licence fees should be used to pay for teams of dog wardens to "arrest" dogs found wandering unsupervised and to bring charges against their owners.

But the Government rejected the idea as bureaucratic and unworkable, and opted to abolish the licence altogether. Field-Fisher and his colleagues were never particularly keen on the warden idea, fearing that it would lead to a lot of untrained people trying to catch dogs in nets.

They also prefer the word "registration" to "licensing", believing that the most important aim should be to identify every dog in Britain and establish its ownership.

As a first step, they instigated their own registration scheme last year, whereby every dog arriving at Battersea has an electronically numbered tag painlessly implanted under its skin.

The number can be read on a simple scanner and identified on a computerized register.

It is only a small start, but Field-Fisher hopes, "in the not too distant future", to launch an appeal in London for all owners of dogs to have their pets tagged voluntarily. Discussions are also taking place with members of the Association of British Dogs' Homes, which hopes to introduce the scheme in other big cities.

Ideally, registration would go hand in hand with widespread sterilization to reduce the number of unwanted litters.

But persuading the Government of the benefits of a national register could be another matter. "It consistently refuses to grapple with the problem," Field-Fisher says. "There are no votes in it, and it costs money."

Kennels where many animals find a home from home



Home comforts: Ruth Hodgkinson, of the Bell Mead staff, with German Shepherd puppies

Profit and peace in an out-of-town haven

It would be hard to think of a greater contrast than between the muddy reaches of the tidal Thames at Battersea and the peaceful river only a few miles upstream, flowing through green fields and woods within sight of Windsor Castle.

The Bell Mead kennels at Priest Hill, Old Windsor, were acquired by Battersea Dogs' Home in 1979. They are divided into four main sites, two of which are run commercially as boarding accommodation for dogs and cats, making up one of the largest such facilities in south-east England.

With a fully equipped grooming parlour, these produce a healthy profit, which helps to pay for the home's main work. Last year this profit was £40,000.

The other two sites are used for various purposes. They include a convalescent home

for animals recovering from operations and for those that are sick and likely to benefit from more peaceful surroundings than the Battersea home.

Bell Mead is also used to accommodate dogs that are not strays or abandoned, but which for some reason cannot be looked after by their owners — for example, those belonging to prisoners remanded in custody to await trial, or to long-stay and frequently elderly hospital patients.

Altogether 400 animals can be accommodated. Because of its setting, it is a more attractive place for the public than Battersea, in particular for families searching for a new pet. David Cavill, the principal, would in some ways like to be able to provide a greater choice of animals for sale, but he feels that might conflict with the kennel's specialist functions.

By no means the least of those functions is to find the biggest Youth Training Scheme projects for kennel staff in the country. During the past three years 30 YTS trainees at a time have spent an average of 18 months studying animal nursing and first aid, disease prevention, nutrition, genetics, hygiene, anatomy and physiology, and grooming and preparing dogs for showing.

Most are residents, staying in Priest Hill Lodge, a late-Victorian mansion overlooking Runnymede. When they leave many of them find jobs in veterinary surgeries, quarantine stations, or with organizations such as the RSPCA or Guide Dogs for the Blind.

There are also occasional foreign students — one each so far from Kenya and Australia, and three expected shortly from Scandinavia.

The policeman's nightly lot

One of the lesser known duties of the 188 Metropolitan Police stations is to file a nightly report to Scotland Yard on the number of stray dogs in their possession. By dawn the next day the Yard will have telexed details to Battersea, and during the morning the home's fleet of five red vans — its "ambulances" — will collect up to 50 starving, frightened and often sick dogs.

It is a procedure that appears to work well, although critics say with some justification that it uses valuable police time. From April, local authorities will take over part of the responsibility for dealing with strays, although the division of duties is still far from clear, and most of those involved believe the bulk of the work will continue to fall on the police.

"Local authorities do not have dog pounds or trained handlers," Colonel Tony

Local authorities are to take some responsibility for strays, but there are fears that this system will fail

Hare, the home's director-general, points out. "The Government wants to lift the burden from the police, but it hasn't really been thought out properly. If any member of the public finds a stray dog, the only place he is going to take it to is a police station."

It is the daily "ambulance run" that brings in most of the home's inmates. A few are received as "gifts" from members of the public who are unable, or unwilling, to look after them any longer.

On admission a dog is given a thorough examination and vaccinated against the main canine diseases.

"Diseases and infections are brought into the home every

day, and we have to fight a constant battle to contain them," Bill Wadman-Taylor, the manager and veterinary surgeon, says. "We also neuter as many as we can."

About 1,000 dogs a year are sterilized at Battersea, although that falls far short of the nation-wide sterilization programme that the home's administrators would like to see linked to a national dog register.

Wadman-Taylor and his wife, Ruth, who is also a vet, were appointed six years ago and occupy a flat on the premises. They both have considerable experience of charity work, and are assisted by four veterinary nurses and

two trainees. Altogether about 80 people work at the home, most of them recruited from Jobcentres. Hours are long, and most of their tasks repetitive and menial, but the staff all appear cheerful and enthusiastic. "What we are trying to do here is just to cope with a situation which ideally should not exist," Hare says. "If it were not for places like this, the whole thing would be out of control."

But, like his staff, Hare remains cheerful, consoling himself with the thought that the situation is apparently not getting any worse. "The figures seem to have a curious cyclical pattern," he observes. "They rose from something over 17,000 in 1982 to a peak of more than 23,000 in 1987, were down in 1988 and apparently well down again last year."

"They must be connected with some social trend... but what?"

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Human Rights Law Report

No jurisdiction to hear complaints by aircraft noise protesters

Powell and Rayner v United Kingdom
(Case No 3/1989/163/219)

Before R. Ryssdal, President and Judges Thor Vilhjálmsson, L. E. Pettit, Sir Vincent Evans, A. Spielmann, E. Palm and I. Folger

Registrar M. A. Eissen
(Judgment February 21)

In a unanimous judgment, the European Court of Human Rights held that there had been no violation of the right to an effective domestic remedy in respect of alleged violations of the European Convention on Human Rights concerning disturbance from aircraft noise near Heathrow Airport.

The Court also held that it had no jurisdiction to entertain complaints of a denial of the right of access to the courts and of an unjustified interference with their right of the two applicants to respect for their private lives and their homes.

The Court was precluded from reviewing the merits of complaints declared inadmissible by the Commission where allegations of violations constituted separate complaints in their own right independently of their relevance in the context of a complaint declared admissible.

Article 6 of the Convention provides: "(1) In the determination of his civil rights and obligations... everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law..."

Article 8 provides: "(1) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life... (2) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of... the economic well-being of the country..."

The first applicant, Mr R. J. Powell, lived in Esher, several miles distant from Heathrow Airport. Since 1972 his home, which he bought in 1957, had lain under a flight departure route which was in use for about four months a year.

Mr Powell's property fell within a noise and number index (NNI) contour rated 35 and considered to be a low noise-annoyance rating. About half a million other people live within that contour area.

The purpose of the NNI was to represent community reaction to the level of aircraft noise so as to guide planning, development and noise control. Thus, no building development was permitted on land having an NNI rating of 60 or more.

The second applicant, Mr M. A. Rayner, farmed land in Colnbrook, Berkshire. His home, which was situated about one and a half miles from Heathrow Airport, was in direct line with the northern runway.

It was frequently overflown and rated 60 on the NNI. Only some 6,500 other people in the vicinity of Heathrow were exposed to noise levels equal to or greater than that.

The legal liability of aircraft operators in respect of damage caused to third parties on the ground was limited by the Civil Aviation Act 1982, section 76(1) of which had the effect of conferring exemption from liability in nuisance in respect of noise emanating from aircraft flying at a reasonable height and observing the relevant air navigation regulations, in particular the regulations on noise certification.

A certain number of noise abatement measures had also been implemented at Heathrow Airport, which had grown steadily since its formal opening in 1946 to become one of the busiest international airports in the world.

Those included restrictions on night jet movements, approach procedures, noise monitoring, runway alteration, noise-related landing charges, a noise insulation grant scheme and a scheme for the purchase of noise-affected properties, as well as noise certification.

The main forum for aircraft noise certification was the international Civil Aviation Organization. The standards set by that organization were implemented in the United Kingdom by means of Air Navigation (Noise Certification) Orders.

An application was initially lodged with the European Commission of Human Rights on December 31, 1980 by the Federation of Heathrow Air Noise Groups, whose complaint was rejected by the Commission.

However, the application was continued by Mr Powell and Mr Rayner, together with another person whose claim had since been settled. They complained of excessive noise levels caused by the operation of Heathrow Airport, and invoked article 1 of Protocol No 1 to the Convention (the peaceful enjoyment of possessions) and article 6, paragraph 1, 8 and 13 of the Convention.

In its report, adopted on January 19, 1989, the Commission expressed the opinion that there had been a violation of article 13 of the Convention in relation to Mr Rayner's claim under article 8 of the Convention (by 12 votes to 4), but not in relation to any of the other claims (unanimously as to both applicants' grievances under article 1 of Protocol No 1 and article 6, (1) of the Convention; by 15 votes to 1 as to Mr Powell's grievance under article 8 of the Convention).

In its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights held: "1. Scope of case before the Court. The applicants' complaint under article 6(1) (the right of access to the courts in civil matters) and article 8 (right to respect for one's private life and home) had been rejected by the Commission at the admissibility stage as being manifestly ill-founded (article 27(2) of the Convention)."

Nonetheless, the applicants argued that the Court possessed jurisdiction to consider the alleged violation of article 13. (The issue under article 1 of Protocol No 1 was not pursued at the Court's hearing.)

The scope of the case before the Court was delimited by the Commission's decision on admissibility. While the Court was master of the characterization to be given in law to the facts submitted to its examination, the allegations of

violation of articles 6 and 8 constituted separate complaints in their own right and not, as suggested by the applicants, mere legal submissions or arguments relating to the same facts as those underlying the allegation of violation of article 13.

Accordingly, the court had no jurisdiction to rule on those complaints independently of their relevance in the context of article 13.

The applicants had contended that in respect of their claims under articles 6(1) and 8 of the Convention there was no domestic authority capable of affording a remedy as required by article 13.

The court recalled its established case-law to the effect that article 13 required a remedy in domestic law only in respect of grievances which could be regarded as arguable in terms of the Convention.

In order to determine whether the claims of violation forming the basis of the applicants' complaints under article 13 were arguable, the particular facts and the nature of the legal issues raised had to be examined in the light of the Convention.

The applicants' grievance under article 6(1) was in essence directed against the terms of section 76(1) of the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

Their complaint under article 8, in that way their grievance did not bring into play article 6 or article 13. As the Commission had pointed out in its admissibility decision, the effect of section 76(1) was to exclude liability in nuisance with regard to the flight of aircraft in certain

circumstances, with the result that the applicants could not claim to have a substantive right under English law to obtain relief from exposure to aircraft noise in those circumstances.

To that extent there was no civil right recognized under domestic law to attract the application of article 6(1). In any event article 13 did not go so far as to guarantee a remedy allowing a contracting state's laws as such to be challenged before a national authority.

For the rest, no arguable claim of violation of article 6(1) could be made in the court's view, derived from the applicants' subsidiary assertion that the limited entitlement to sue permitted by section 76(1) was illusory.

Access to the domestic courts was available to any person who considered that he had a cause of action in nuisance under English law. If a question of the application of section 76(1) arose, it was for the courts to decide.

Accordingly, there was no violation of article 13 in respect of the applicants' claims under article 6(1).

Article 8 was found to be a material provision in relation to both Mr Powell and Mr Rayner, since in each case, albeit to greatly differing degrees, the quality of the applicant's private life and the scope for enjoying the amenities of his home had been adversely affected by the noise generated by aircraft using Heathrow Airport.

Whether the present cases were analysed in terms of a positive duty on the state to take reasonable and appropriate measures to secure the applicants' right under article 8(1) in terms of an interference by a

public authority to be justified in accordance with article 8(2), the applicable principles were broadly similar.

In both contexts, regard had to be paid to the fair balance to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and of the community as a whole, and in both contexts a margin of appreciation in determining the steps to be taken to ensure compliance with the Convention.

Furthermore, even in relation to the positive obligations flowing from the first paragraph of article 8, in striking the required balance, the aims mentioned in the second paragraph could be of a certain relevance.

The applicants themselves had conceded that the operation of a major international airport such as Heathrow pursued a legitimate aim (in the interests of the economic well-being of the country) and that the consequential negative impact on the environment could not be entirely eliminated.

The Court further noted that a number of measures had been introduced by the responsible authorities to control, abate and compensate for aircraft noise at and around Heathrow Airport.

Those measures, adopted progressively as a result of consultation of the different interests and people concerned, had taken due account of international standards established, developments in aircraft technology, and the varying levels of disturbance suffered by those living around Heathrow Airport.

As to the exclusion of liability in nuisance set out in section 76(1) of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, successive governments

in the United Kingdom had proceeded on the view that the problems posed by aircraft noise were better dealt with by taking and enforcing measures to ensure that disturbance caused by aircraft noise was minimised.

In the view of the foregoing, there was no serious ground for maintaining that either the policy approach to the problem of aircraft noise or the particular regulatory measures adopted by the United Kingdom authorities gave rise to violation of article 8, even in relation to Mr Rayner who had suffered a much higher level of disturbance.

In conclusion, there had been no violation of article 13 in respect of the claims of either applicant under article 8.

For those reasons, the Court unanimously held: "1. That it had no jurisdiction to entertain the applicants' complaints under articles 6(1) and 8, and 2. That there had been no violation of article 13 in respect of either applicant."

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Queen's Bench Divisional Court

Law Report February 22 1990

Chancery Division

Pre-Act hospital spending lawful

Tax relief on overseas loan interest

Regina v Secretary of State for Health and Others, Ex parte Keen
Before Lord Justice Woolf and Mr Justice Pill
(Judgment February 21)

There was nothing to prevent the Secretary of State for Health and the relevant regional and district health authorities taking the necessary steps to prepare an application for Guy's Hospital to have the status of a National Health Service Trust to be submitted if and when the National Health Service and Community Bill, now before Parliament, became law.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in rejecting an application by Professor Harry Keen, director of the unit for metabolic medicine and director of clinical services/medicine at Guy's Hospital, for judicial review of the expenditure of resources on the preparation for a change of the hospital's status.

Section 1 of the National Health Service Act 1977 provides: "(1) It is the duty of the Secretary of State to secure the provision of a comprehensive health service designed to secure improvement - (a) in the physical and mental health of the people of Great Britain; and (b) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness, and for that purpose to provide or secure the effective provision of services in accordance with this Act."

"(2) The services so provided shall be free of charge except so far as the making, and recovery of charges is expressly provided for by or under any enactment, whenever passed."

By section 2: "Without prejudice to the duty of the Secretary of State to secure the provision of a comprehensive health service, he has power - (a) to provide such services as he considers appropriate for the purpose of discharging any duty imposed on him by this Act; and (b) to do any other thing whatsoever which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of such a duty."

"This section is subject to section 3(3) below."

By section 3: "(1) It is the duty of the Secretary of State to secure the provision of a comprehensive health service throughout England and Wales, to such extent as he considers necessary to meet all reasonable requirements - (a) of hospital accommodation; (b) of other accommodation; (c) of any service provided under this Act; (d) of medical, dental, nursing and ambulance services; (e) of such other facilities for the care of expectant and nursing mothers and children as he considers appropriate as part of the health service; (f) of such facilities for the prevention of illness, the care of persons suffering from illness and the after-care of persons

who have suffered from illness as he considers appropriate as part of the health service; (g) of such other services as are required for the diagnosis and treatment of illness."

By section 23: "(1) The Secretary of State may, where he considers it appropriate, arrange with any person or body (including a voluntary organization) for that person or body to provide, or assist in providing, any service under this Act."

"(3) The powers conferred by this section may be exercised on such terms as may be agreed, including terms as to the making of payments by or to the Secretary of State, and any goods or materials may be made available either temporarily or permanently."

Mr James Goudie, QC and Mr David Bean for the Secretary of State, and Mr David Pannick for the Secretary of State, Mr Robert Owen, QC and Mr Philip Havers for the South East Thames Regional Health Authority and the Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority.

LORD JUSTICE WOOLF, giving the judgment of the court, said that the National Health Service and Community Care Bill was likely, if it became law, to be in force by early 1990.

It was directed to provide the statutory framework for implementing the government's proposals for changes in the NHS.

One of the key changes was to enable hospitals to apply "for a new self-governing status as NHS hospital trusts - a new type of corporate body, currently unknown to the law."

It was expected that the trusts should manage both hospitals which were previously NHS hospitals and other hospitals which were either new or had not previously been managed or provided by the NHS.

The government had suggested that it would be attractive to an existing NHS hospital to be converted into an NHS trust because trusts would have a range of powers and freedoms that would not be available to health authorities generally.

It was clear that the secretary of state wanted to be in a position to announce the conversion of existing NHS trusts soon after the Bill was enacted. There had been a considerable amount of preparation for which the Department of Health had provided substantial sums.

The question whether Guy's Hospital should apply for self-governing status as an NHS trust was seriously considered by the Secretary of State. There was considerable controversy about the issue in the hospital. A majority of consultants who voted in a ballot had opposed the proposal.

Professor Keen's application raised the question of the steps which it was lawful for public bodies to take in order to implement anticipated legislation which would affect the manner in which they performed their responsibilities to the public.

Mr Goudie submitted that while it was not unlawful to carry out an evaluation of proposed legislative changes it was unlawful to expend public money to prepare applications for a change of status by existing hospitals to a new status which would not come into existence until the Bill became law.

Mr Laws and Mr Owen contended that such applications were lawful and that it was a matter of commonsense and good administration that they should be taken in the context of a Bill before Parliament.

Which view was right depended on the existing powers of the secretary of state and the regional and district health authorities. The existing powers were contained in the National Health Service Act 1977 and the National Health Service Functions (Directions to Authorities and Administrative Arrangements) (SI 1982 No 287) made under that Act.

There were two issues as to the construction of section 1 of the 1977 Act. The first was whether the words in subsection (1) "in accordance with this Act" related back to the government of the NHS or only to the provision of services.

In his Lordship's view the existence of a comma after the word "illness" was significant and meant that it was only the provision of services which was to be "in accordance with this Act". As a result, the secretary of state's duty to promote a comprehensive health service was not confined by the words "in accordance with this Act".

His Lordship found that section 2, taken together with section 3(1) and section 23(1) gave the secretary of state power to provide services either directly or pursuant to arrangements which he made with another person or body as he considered appropriate for the purpose of discharging his duty to provide a comprehensive health service.

Was this a situation where the government could not lawfully expend large sums of public money on the making of preparations for the implementation of a Bill before it became law without paying

legislation to authorize the expenditure?

The combined effect of sections 2, 3(1) and 23 was that while the secretary of state did not have the power to approve an application and a regional or district health authority did not have the power to make a binding decision to apply for NHS trust status for a hospital, it was unlawful to expend public money to prepare applications for a change of status by existing hospitals to a new status which would not come into existence until the Bill became law.

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Inland Revenue Commissioners v Commercial Bank AG
IRC v Banco do Brasil SA
Before Mr Justice Mummery
(Judgment February 9)

The provisions of the 1966 double taxation relief Convention negotiated between the United States and the United Kingdom applied to payments of interest made by the USA to US corporations received by the London branches of overseas banks.

Article XV, as amended and scheduled to the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (USA) Order (SI 1986 No 1182), was not to be construed as restricting the benefit of the relief to the citizens, residents or corporations of either of the contracting parties to the Convention.

Mr Justice Mummery so held in a reserved judgment, in dismissing appeals by the Crown by way of case stated from determinations of special commissioners that had allowed separate appeals by Commerzbank AG and Banco do Brasil SA against refusals of the Revenue to their claims to relief from corporation tax under section 497(1) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970.

Section 497 makes provisions for relief by agreement with other countries.

Article XV of the 1966 Convention provided: "Dividends and interest paid by a

corporation of one contracting party shall be exempt from tax in the other contracting party except where the recipient is a citizen, resident, or corporation of that other contracting party. This exemption shall not apply if the corporation paying such dividends or interest is a resident of the other contracting party."

Article 11 of the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (USA) Order (SI 1986 No 1182) now applies to payments of such interest.

Mr Alan Moses for the Crown; Mr Stephen Oliver QC and Mr David Evans for Commerzbank; Mr Graham Aaronson, QC, for Banco do Brasil.

MR JUSTICE MUMMERY, in a reserved judgment, said that the banks' claims related to accounting years as long ago as 1973 to 1976. The figures, that involved very substantial amounts of tax, were agreed.

The issue was whether, when properly interpreted, article XV conferred an exemption on the banks' interest payments to US corporations to the London branches of the two banks. There was no material difference between the agreed facts in each appeal.

Neither bank was resident for tax purposes in the United Kingdom or in the US. Each maintained a branch in London from where trading activities were conducted.

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Ballesteros takes to a little bit of America in desert

By John Hennessey

Dubai

Having locked horns unsuccessfully with Greg Norman in Australia last week, Nick Faldo, Master golfer in two continents, faces another formidable opponent in the Emirates Airline Desert Classic here this week. He is Severiano Ballesteros, who will be making his first appearance of the season after a prolonged period of R and R.

Unlike Faldo, who arrived here in the early hours of Tuesday, Ballesteros has been established in the desert for more than a week, preparing a video which, he believes, will sell a million over the next five years.

Even in this burgeoning area of golf commercialisation, Faldo and Ballesteros are intense rivals. So far Faldo's video from last year has sold 115,000 copies which, he claims, surpasses one by George Best as the top seller among sporting subjects. He is about to embark on another.

But videos would count for nothing without the players' recognized expertise on the golf course and their confrontation here this week, achieved almost at the last minute when wheels within wheels surmounted the obstacle of appearance money for Faldo as well as Ballesteros.

GOLF

Card of course

Hole	Yds	Par	Faldo	Ballesteros
1	433	4	10	540
2	351	4	12	189
3	182	3	13	250
4	450	4	18	177
5	184	3	18	352
6	450	4	18	301
7	450	4	18	301
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Total par: 7,100

Faldo: 3,338

Ballesteros: 3,338

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An American visitor has an energetic way of seeing the sights

In the best tradition of sisterly support

By Alex Ramsay

THE TIMES
UNISYS
ADT London
Marathon Appeal

Oxford — the home of academe, of dreaming spires, of culture.

Adrian Jagger, the place is

knee-deep in them. Wherever

you go in Oxford there are

earnest-looking figures dodging

the traffic in search of fitness.

But few run with more purpose

than Dr Jan Friedmann, director

of the Anglo-American programme

at St Julie Hall and the 12-strong

group of *The Times/Unisys* fund

runners in the ADT London

Marathon on April 22.

St Julie Hall's programme

provides for a dozen sophomore

(second-year) students to study

in Oxford for a year. They all

come from Trinity College in

Washington DC — the oldest

women's Catholic college in the

United States. St Julie Hall

itself is linked to the Oxford

convent of the Sisters of Notre

Dame de Namur, the founding

order of Trinity College.

Friedmann, herself from Wash-

ington, aims to raise 25,000-

20,000 to help fund the

programme.

"Being the only woman chosen

by *The Times* doesn't make

me feel like the odd one out at

all," she said. "When I was

growing up and at college all my

role models were women. And

many were the first feminists —

they educated women before

anyone else."

Friedmann is a veteran of both

marathons and of Oxford. She

has competed in four New York

marathons, the first in 1980.

"The New York and London

marathons are really events

rather than running races. They

are fun. In New York it is

spectacular. The crowds are

sheep along the route and the

New Yorkers are all out for a

street party. One time, around

the 16-mile mark, the guy I was

running with started doing car-

wheels down First Avenue. The

crowd loved it. It is just a good

time."

Less than Friedmann was in

Oxford it was a student. Now

20 years later and at the age of

39, she is rediscovering her

memories and taking careful

note of the things she missed

first time around.

"Looking back at it now, that

year was even more spectacular.

But coming back I now realize

how fortunate these kids are to

be on the programme."

Taking sculling lessons and

learning to play rowing in the

lake were things Friedmann

has happily gotten back into

student and academic life. "A lot

of days I feel like I'm a college

apartment again," she said.

"But things have come up to

remind me of the age difference.

This year's students were born

in the same year I was in Oxford

studying on the same

programme."

Fully stretched: Jan Friedmann prepares for another training run for the London Marathon



Fully stretched: Jan Friedmann prepares for another training run for the London Marathon

It is now 25 years since the first Trinity College girl came to study at St Julie Hall and in Friedmann's opinion it is a unique opportunity for the girls to study in Oxford.

"If you open up so many possibilities," she explained, "it is a valuable experience and helps international understanding."

The students must definitely be happy here — there are no signs of homesickness. It is amazing how quickly Anglophiles sets in. Hopefully the money I raise will help the programme continue and help with the expenses of the girls.

"I'm a fairly athletic and enjoy running anyway and the marathon is a nice way to raise money for this cause."

Her training is going according to plan, give or take a few minor hiccups. "I sprained my knee last week just by standing up," she said. "I suppose it is just another sign of age but it makes you appreciate how precious some joints are."

Friedmann's training runs take her through Oxford and its parks and also give her the chance to see something of the English countryside — in fact she regards a marathon as a perfect sightseeing opportunity.

"It is especially true in New York where I am really looking forward to that in London," she said.

"Ten years ago I set myself a goal to run in the New York Marathon and because it was such an experience I decided to

keep on with it. It is quite something to have so many people cheering you on all round the route. It is the nearest I'll ever come to a state of euphoria."

The *Times* and *Unisys* hope that by featuring the efforts of our 12 fund runners we will help them find sponsorship. If you wish to support one or more of them, write clearly stating your contribution to *The Times/Unisys London Marathon Appeal*, Sports Department, The Times, Virginia Street, London E1 5NN. We will send you their donations.

Unisys are offering a £1000 personal computer to the biggest fund raiser of our 12 and a jerrycan and magazine of champagne respectively to the second and third largest.

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